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# MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

JUNE, 1887

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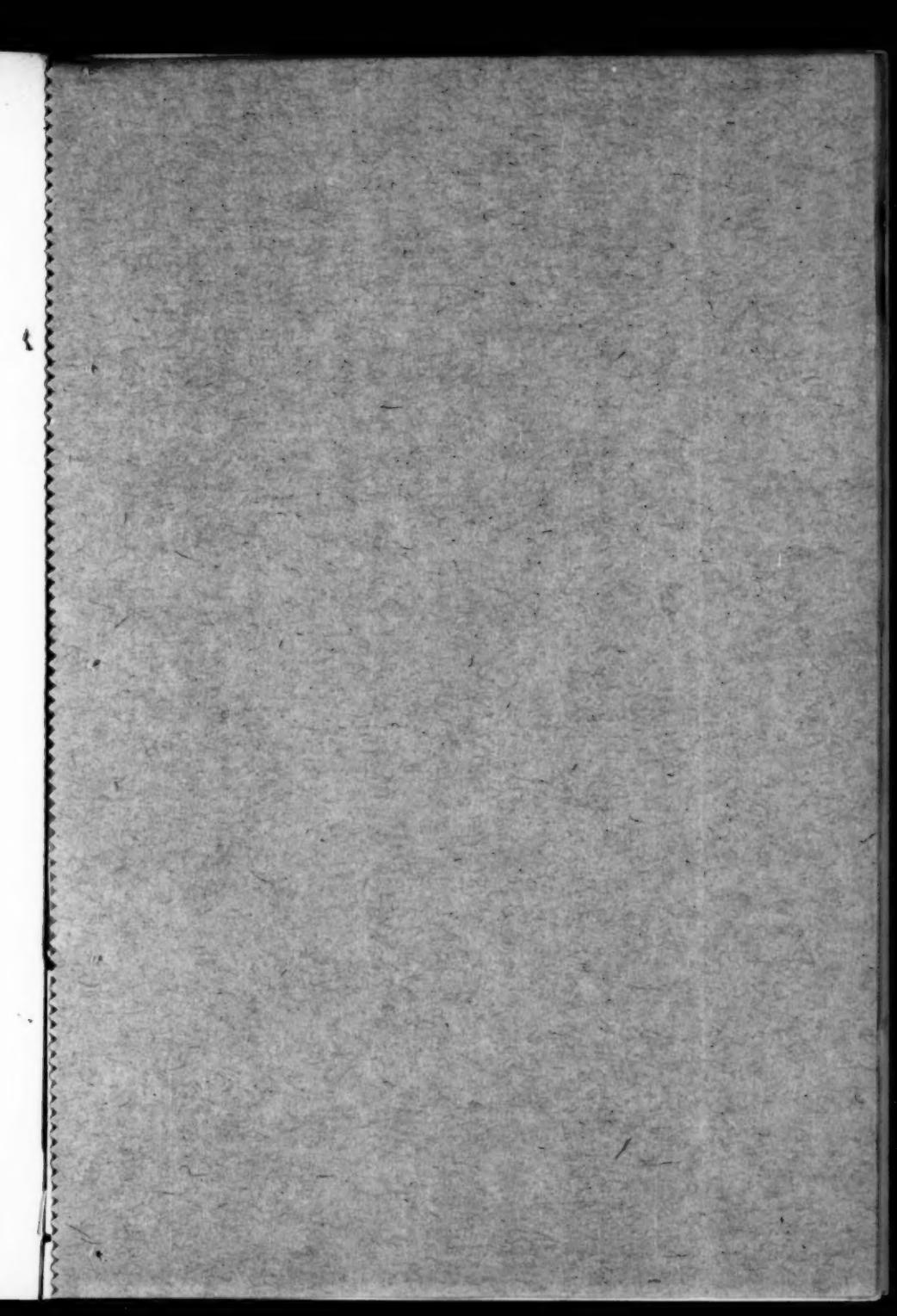
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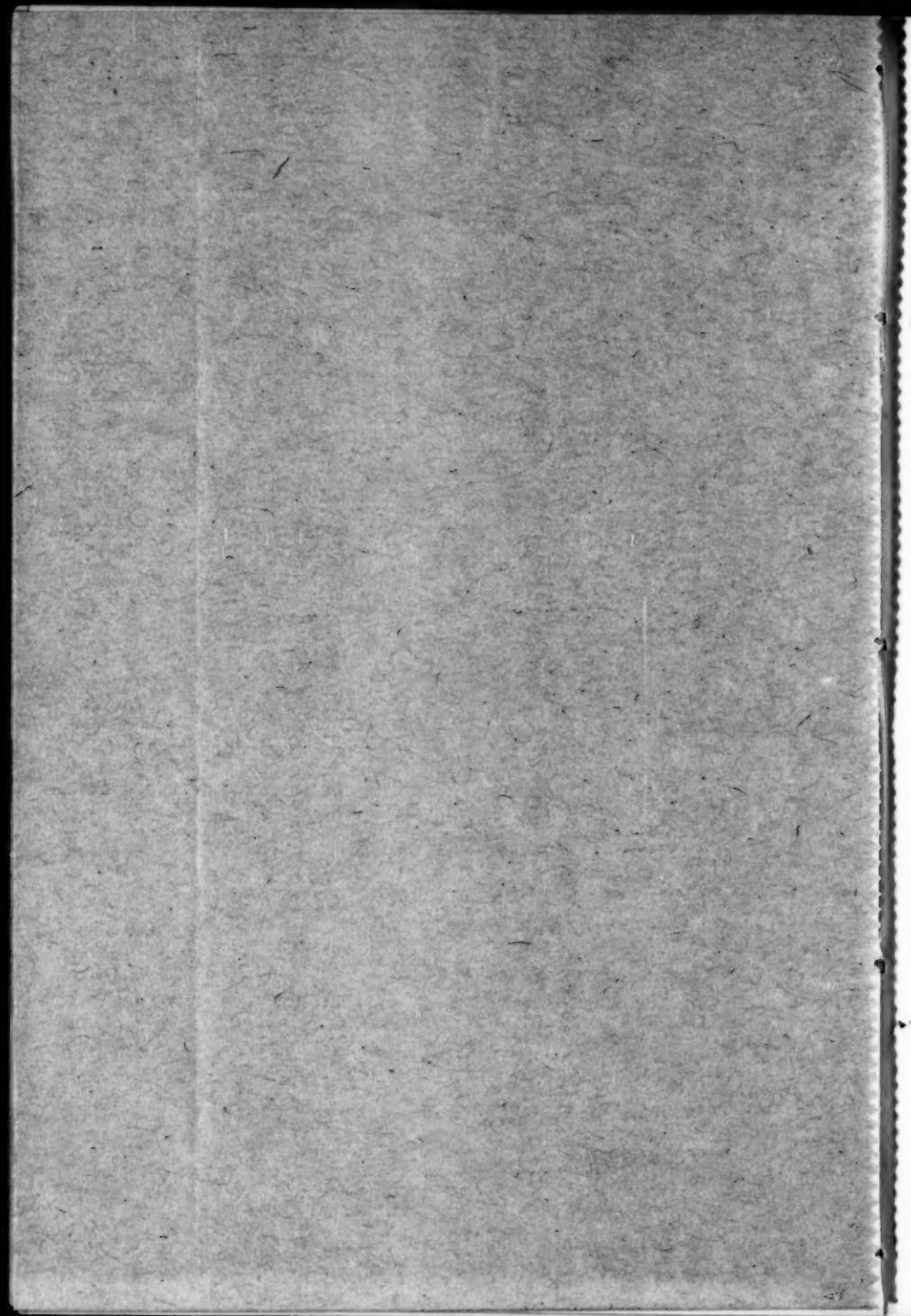
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No. 332, FOR JUNE.

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# MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

JUNE, 1887.

## COLERIDGE'S "ODE TO WORDSWORTH."

THERE are few lines in the loftier walks of English poetry better known than these following :

" O Lady ! we receive but what we give,  
And in our life alone does nature live :  
Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud ! "

But, as is the case with many another familiar quotation, they are better known than is the splendid poem in which they are to be found. They occur in Coleridge's ode " Dejection,"—not, as usually cited, " Ode to Dejection," which by no means describes it. Dejection is indeed the topic of the poem, but not the personified object of it.

The history of this poem is interesting. It was written, as the poet's daughter tells us in her edition of the " Biographia Literaria," on April 4th, 1802. Coleridge had then been living since the summer of 1800 at Greta Hall, near Keswick, the house to be afterwards honourably distinguished as the long residence of the admirable Southey. The house, when Coleridge took it, was partitioned off into two dwelling-places, one of which was occupied by the owner and landlord. Coleridge was attracted to the Lake country, we may be sure, by the circumstance that Wordsworth was only twelve miles off, at Grasmere.

Coleridge had been writing more or less regularly for the " Morning Post " before he went to reside at Greta Hall,

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and he continued to do so for several years. The poem on Dejection, written in April of the year 1802, remained unprinted for just six months, when it appeared in the " Morning Post " of October 4th, 1802, and then remained uncollected and unacknowledged by its author until the publication of the " Sibylline Leaves " in 1815. The lines just cited are certainly the best known in the whole poem, though it abounds in passages of rare eloquence and beauty. Hence the Lady there addressed is closely associated in our minds with the poem and its author. And it is therefore the more interesting to note that in the version of the ode as first printed the Lady does not appear, her place being filled throughout by a certain " Edmund," to whom the poem is virtually addressed. Those who will refer to the four-volumed edition of Coleridge's poems<sup>1</sup> will find a record of the fact, and in the notes certain other variations between the first text of the poem and that afterwards given in the " Sibylline Leaves." The principal variations may be supplied without reference if the reader remembers to substitute " Edmund " for " Lady " where the latter word occurs, and to alter the personal and other pronouns—" he " for " she," and so forth—in due accord.

<sup>1</sup> Published by Pickering in 1877, but now the property of Messrs. Macmillan.

Thus, in the second stanza or strophe of the ode we shall read thus :

" O Edmund ! in this wan and heartless mood,  
To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd,  
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,  
Have I been gazing on the western sky  
And its peculiar tint of yellow green."

And the fifth section of the ode will run as follows :

" O pure of heart ! thou needst not ask of me  
What this strong music in the soul may be !  
What, and wherein it doth exist,  
This light, this glory, this fair luminous  
mist,  
This beautiful and beauty-making power.  
Joy, virtuous Edmund ! joy that ne'er  
was given,  
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,  
Life and life's effluence, cloud at once and  
shower,  
Joy, Edmund ! is the spirit and the power  
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower—  
A new Earth and new Heaven  
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud."

But it is when we arrive at the concluding lines of the ode that we find the most significant divergence between the two versions. In the latter text five lines have disappeared from the earlier, and by restoring these we find the ode originally ending thus :

" 'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of  
sleep :  
Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep !  
Visit him, gentle Sleep ! with wings of  
healing,  
And may this storm be but a mountain-  
birth,  
May all the stars hang bright above his  
dwelling,  
Silent as though they watched the  
sleeping Earth.  
With light heart may he rise,  
Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,  
And sing his lofty song, and teach me to  
rejoice !  
O Edmund, friend of my devoutest choice,  
O raised from anxious dread and busy care  
By the immenseness of the good and fair  
Which thou seest everywhere,  
Joy lifts thy spirit, joy attunes thy voice ;  
To him may all things live from pole to pole,  
Their life the eddying of his living soul.  
O simple spirit, guided from above !  
Dear Edmund ! friend devoutest of my choice,  
Thou mayst thou ever, evermore rejoice."

Now the question at once presents itself—who was the "Edmund" of the poem as originally conceived ? The

passages afterwards omitted seem to mark him out as a more real person than the shadowy "Lady" substituted for him. The mere name of Edmund tells nothing, suggests nothing. Coleridge was fond of the name, using it elsewhere for imaginary personages in his song. But there is something in the almost impassioned earnestness of the language here employed, and in the definiteness of the qualities attributed to him, that prevent our regarding him as a mere poetical device, a lay figure about whom the verses might be draped. He is spoken of as Coleridge's dearest friend, as a poet of noblest aims, and as one to whom especially the "pure heart" and the deep communion with Nature have brought a joy "undreamt of by the sensual and the proud." Was there any one of whom all this might be told with pre-eminent truth ? Certainly there was, and the man was Wordsworth. Since the two poets first met five years before, the influence of no other personal friend over Coleridge could be described in the terms used in this poem. Wordsworth was beyond question his dearest friend and his poetic master. It was the association with the mind and spirit of Wordsworth that had caused the younger poet to rise above the plaintive melodiousness of Bowles into altogether different regions of thought and feeling.

Reading over again the first version of the ode (which is really an Ode to Edmund, though its subject is the poet's own state of mind), we discover, I think, a fresh interest in it, as well as some other internal evidence as to the identity of "Edmund." We cannot be wrong, for instance, in recognising a distinct allusion to Wordsworth's Lucy Gray, the "solitary child," in the seventh section of the ode. The raving of the wind recalls the poet from thoughts of his own afflictions to listen to this new voice. He hears at first in the storm-blasts the "rushing of a host in rout, with groans of trampled men," and then the tempest

modulates into a gentler key of sadness :

" But hush ! there is a pause of deepest silence,  
And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,  
With groans and tremulous shudderings—  
all is over.

It tells another tale, with sounds less deep  
and loud—

A tale of less affright,  
And tempered with delight,  
As Otway's self had framed the tender lay.  
'Tis of a little child

Upon a lonesome wild  
Not far from home, but she hath lost her  
way :

And now moans loud in bitter grief and fear,  
And now screams loud, and hopes to make  
her mother hear."

Here the graceful indirect compliment to his friend "as Otway's self had framed the tender lay": the words "lonesome wild," borrowed from the last stanza but one of "Lucy Gray": the reference to the "bridge of wood, a furlong from their door," which the child had reached unconsciously after her long wanderings, in the line,

" Not far from home, but she hath lost her  
way,"

all point beyond doubt to the poem written by Wordsworth when in Germany, and published in the second volume of "Lyrical Ballads," in 1800.

There is yet one other piece of circumstantial evidence as to the identity of "Edmund" that has never to my knowledge been adduced. It occurs in a letter of Charles Lamb to Coleridge, bearing date October 9th, 1802, five days (that is to say) after the appearance of the Ode in the "Morning Post." The letter is in Latin, a freak in which Lamb occasionally indulged with Coleridge, Procter, Cary and others of his more intimate correspondents. Thackeray once described those Latin letters of Sterne's, in which he delivered himself with such cynical frankness on his conjugal difficulties, as written in very "sad-dog" Latin. Lamb's corresponding use of that tongue is rather "jolly-dog" Latin, and its meaning in consequence not always easy to disentangle. But the following sentence is not obscure,

though the Latinity may be doubtful :

" *Istas Wordsworthianas nuptias (vel potius cuiusdam Edmundii tui) te retulisse mirificum gaudere :*"

which may be freely rendered, "I am awfully glad to receive your account of the marriage of Wordsworth (or perhaps I should rather say, of a certain *Edmund* of yours)" Wordsworth had been married to Mary Hutchinson on October 4th, the very day, it may be observed, on which Coleridge's poem appeared in the "Morning Post." Here therefore, five days after Wordsworth's wedding, and the simultaneous appearance of Coleridge's poem addressed to his friend Edmund, we find Lamb making an allusion to the identity of the two, which cannot be mistaken. Finally, we are told by Professor Knight in his admirable Library Edition of Wordsworth (vol. iii. 423-4) that among the manuscripts at Coleorton is a copy of "Dejection," sent by Coleridge to Sir George Beaumont in April, 1802, in which (presumably) first draft of all, the name used is not Edmund, but Wordsworth's own, the famous couplet appearing thus :

" O William ! we receive but what we give ;  
And in our life alone does nature live"—

the other variations being all in due accord.

The reasons which led Coleridge to substitute "Edmund" for "William," when six months' later he sent the poem to his friend Stuart for the "Morning Post," can only be matter for conjecture. Poetically, we may be well satisfied that the change was made. The name of "William" has seen many vicissitudes and received many humorous side-lights in the last half century, and one of the most beautiful poems in the language would have suffered grievous wrong if it had been left to descend to us in its precise original form. Its author was as wise in changing the "William," as that William himself was in dropping

"dear brother Jim" out of his pathetic "We are Seven." But no like injury would have been wrought by preserving the name "Edmund" as final. Moreover, in changing "William" for "Edmund" no change was made in the motive and purport of the poem. As Lamb, and doubtless all other friends of Coleridge and Wordsworth were aware, the ode was still addressed to Wordsworth. But the situation is altogether altered when, at some period within the next twelve years, Coleridge decided to remove as far as possible all traces of its original dedication, not only by substituting for "Edmund" the intangible and quite unrecognisable impersonation "Lady," but by omitting those lines which had served most clearly to point out Wordsworth as the poet addressed. Why Coleridge took this course, and whether any friend at all was addressed as "Lady," there is no evidence to show. But the fact remains that, by the change of name and the omission of those passages, the historical interest of the ode, as bearing on the lives of Coleridge and Wordsworth, entirely disappears. For there is a history in the poem, as first framed, and one of the most pathetic in English literature.

When Coleridge wrote "Dejection" he was still short of completing his thirtieth year. He had lived at Keswick nearly two years, himself and family supported by the pension of 150*l.* a year from the brothers Wedgwood, and by the payment for occasional essays and poems in the daily papers. His poetic prime was already past. "He had four poetical epochs," writes his son in the supplementary memoir of the "Biographia Literaria," "which represented in some sort boyhood, youthful manhood, middle age, and the decline of life." The first of these extends to the year 1796. The second is comprised within some three years only, but in it the noblest fruits of Coleridge's genius were produced—"The Ancient Mariner," "The Dark Ladie," the first

part of "Christabel," "Fears in Solitude," "Kubla Khan," the "Hymn in the Valley of Chamouni," and others of less note. The poems which succeed open the third period of Coleridge's poetic life. "They are distinguished from those of my father's Stowey life," continues H. N. Coleridge, "by a less buoyant spirit. Poetic fire they have, but not the clear bright mounting flame of his earlier poetry. Their meditative vein is graver, and they seem tinged with the sombre hues of middle age; though some of them were written before the author was thirty-five years old. A characteristic poem of this period is 'Dejection,' an Ode composed at Keswick, April 4th, 1802."

The near relatives of the poet here content themselves, as was natural, with this simple record of facts. It was enough for them to note that, for whatever reason, the "clear mounting flame" of his earlier poetry had ceased to rise. But later biographers, untrammelled by the family tie, have had to inquire into and account for this change, without fear or favour. Mr. Traill, in the best memoir of Coleridge that has yet appeared, says no more than the truth when he speaks of the period between 1800 and 1804 as "the turning-point, moral and physical, of Coleridge's career. The next few years determined not only his destiny as a writer, but his life as a man. Between his arrival at Keswick in the summer of 1800 and his departure for Malta in the spring of 1804, that fatal change of constitution, temperament, and habits which governed the whole of his subsequent history had fully established itself. Between these two dates he was transformed from the Coleridge of whom his young fellow-students in Germany have left us so pleasing a picture, into the Coleridge whom distressed kinsmen, alienated friends, and a disappointed public were to have before them for the remainder of his days. Here then at Keswick, and in these first two or three years of the century—here or nowhere is the key

to the melancholy mystery to be found."<sup>1</sup>

And this key, as every one now knows, is to be found in the habit of opium-eating which was begun during these first years (1800—1802) at Greta Hall. The exact date at which Coleridge found among the magazines in his neighbour's library an advertisement of the virtues of the "Kendal Black Drop," and thought of trying it as a possible cure for his rheumatic and gastric troubles, is not known. But Coleridge himself refers to the beginning of the year 1803 as being "soon after his eyes had been opened to the true nature of the habit into which he had been ignorantly deluded." It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that the consumption of the Kendal opiate had been going on for many months, when Coleridge at last discovered that he could not live without it, and that it had attained a fatal dominion over his mind and will. And if this were so, the mischief was at work, even though Coleridge little guessed its extent or cause, when the growing melancholy of his poetic outlook found expression in these saddest of sad verses.

And the poem acquires, I think, a yet deeper pathos when we remember (what is effectually concealed in the version as afterwards modified) that it was to Wordsworth that Coleridge's thoughts turned, not only as the confidant of his griefs, but as supplying the most poignant contrast to his own condition and state of mind. When read with the name "Edmund" retained in it, and the few but deeply significant passages afterwards omitted, the ode becomes as interesting in its bearing upon Wordsworth as upon Coleridge. For the writer discerns in his friend just those qualities in which himself is wanting. Wordsworth was the elder man by some two years. He too was a poet, and devoted to poetry; and looking to support by its means himself and the wife he was so soon going to bring home, his old friend

<sup>1</sup> "Coleridge." English Men of Letters Series.

and playfellow, Mary Hutchinson. He was poor, but contented to be poor. He had not yet reached his poetic prime—his powers were maturing daily. The "Excursion" and the "Prelude," the "Solitary Reaper" and the "Highland Girl," the "Ode on Immortality" and the "Ode to Duty" were yet to be. In all these respects, in character, temperament, in "the reason firm, the temperate will," as well as in the career which lay before him, life and health permitting, Coleridge could not but recognise that his neighbour and dearest friend presented the strangest saddest contrast to himself. The ode "Dejection" has been always recognised as a wonderfully true piece of self-presentation; but it is hardly less valuable as a tribute to the real secret of the strength which Coleridge saw maturing in another.

"I may not hope from outward forms to win  
The passion and the life, whose fountains  
are within."

This is the key-note of the poem—"We receive but what we give." "From the soul itself must issue forth" the fair luminous cloud that envelopes the earth. The writer had lost that "fair luminous cloud," never to regain it. But there was one friend, at least, to whom these hidden fountains of joy were no mystery,

"O pure of heart! *thou* needs't not ask of me  
What this strong music in the soul may be."

I have italicised the "thou," for so it clearly should be emphasised; and the "thou," it should never be forgotten, was William Wordsworth.

The first version of the ode is assuredly worthy of preservation if only for the exquisite lines in the last stanza, afterwards necessarily omitted when the Lady (whoever she may have been) was substituted for the person originally addressed:

"O Edmund, friend of my devoutest choice;  
O raised from anxious dread and busy care  
By the immenseness of the good and fair  
Which thou sees't everywhere."

No lines, as telling the secret of Wordsworth's unique power, are better worth rescuing from oblivion.

And here, too, the contrast between Coleridge and his friend which pervades the poem, is indicated beyond question. The "anxious dread" and the "busy care" were already beginning to work their ravages upon Coleridge's own heart and spirit, and the "immenseness of the good and fair" no longer prevailed against them.

Wordsworth, "friend of his devoutest choice," must have read these lines in their earliest shape, when he was addressed in them by his actual name. He did not then know about the opium. None of Coleridge's nearest and dearest seem to have known till years afterwards of the subtle enemy that he was "putting into his mouth" to steal away, if not his brains, assuredly his self-control and his peace of mind. But Wordsworth must have seen that things were going wrong with his friend, and that this poem was only too literal a transcript of the writer's own mood. How it affected Wordsworth directly, how far it influenced the current of his own thoughts, is only a matter of conjecture. There was no declared or obvious poetic response to it on his part. There is indeed one memorable portrait drawn by Wordsworth of his friend, and it belongs to this year, though the exact date is not fixed. The "Lines written in my own copy of the 'Castle of Indolence,'" supply the well-known portrait of "the noticeable man with large grey eyes"—the pale face that seemed "as if a blooming face it ought to be"—and the low-hung lip "deprest by weight of musing Phantasy." The picture was drawn out of doors, and from the life, as Wordsworth informed Miss Fenwick: "Composed in the orchard, Town-end, Grasmere, Coleridge living much with us at this time." But though there is an atmosphere of melancholy thrown over the picture, it is made also to envelope Wordsworth himself, who is described in the opening stanzas of the poem. The sombre colouring is primarily intended to harmonise with that of Thomson's

poem which suggested it, and with that series of cabinet portraits which those of Wordsworth and Coleridge are designed to supplement. The orchard at Town-end was their "Castle of Indolence." But there is yet another poem of Wordsworth's, written just one month after Coleridge's Ode, supplying so startling a commentary upon it that I cannot think it a mere coincidence. On May 7th, 1802, Wordsworth wrote his "Leech-gatherer, or, Resolution and Independence." This poem, like so many of the rest, was suggested by an actual incident. "The Leech-gatherer," so Wordsworth himself tells us, "I met a few hundred yards from my cottage, and the account of him is taken from his own mouth." But this was not a then recent incident. It was eighteen months before, in October, 1800, according to Dorothy Wordsworth, that she and her brother had met the old Leech-gatherer. "He was of Scotch parents, but had been born in the army. He had had a wife 'and a good woman, and it pleased God to bless him with ten children.' All these were dead but one, of whom he had not heard for many years, a sailor. His trade was to gather leeches; but now leeches were scarce, and he had not strength for it." Why was it that just eighteen months after, Wordsworth was moved to repeat the old man's story and all he had learned from it?

We cannot say, and it is never well to be dogmatic. But the deeply touching appropriateness of this poem as a comment upon Coleridge's "Ode to Wordsworth," then fresh in that friend's memory, need not be ignored merely because nothing can be proved. Here, as in the ode, the contrast between Joy and Despondency is the pervading thought. The poet describes himself as travelling upon the moor "as happy as a boy," drawing happiness from all the joyful creatures within sight and sound:

"But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the  
might  
Of joy in minds that can no further go,

As high as we have mounted in delight  
In our dejection do we sink as low ;  
To me that morning did it happen so :  
And fears and fancies thick upon me came ;  
Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew  
not, nor could name."

Happiness may not endure : it may be  
succeeded by a very different day :  
" Solitude, pain of heart, distress and po-  
verty."

And then follows the strange confes-  
sion, so little true of Wordsworth, but  
so curiously and almost pointedly true  
of the author of " Dejection," the ode  
then just before sent to him :

" My whole life I have lived in pleasant  
thought,  
As if life's business were a summer mood :  
As if all needful things would come un-  
sought  
To genial faith, still rich in genial good :  
But how can he expect that others should  
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call  
Love him, who for himself will take no  
heed at all."

The noble stanza that follows, recalling  
Chatterton and Burns, there is no need  
to quote (for who does not know it ?)  
—but the line,

" By our own spirits are we deified,"  
may be cited as summing up, in the  
magical terseness that belongs to  
Wordsworth's diction at its best,  
the moral of Coleridge's Ode. It is  
the echo of,

" O Edmund ! we receive but what we give."

But there the parallel between the  
two poems begins and ends. The  
moral of the one, even as its title, is  
Resolution and Independence : the  
meaning of the other, as poor Cole-  
ridge was just awaking to discover,  
was Irresolution and Dependence. Coleridge  
was losing not only the  
" shaping spirit of Imagination," never  
more to be recovered, but something  
of far greater importance to his life.  
And the two things he felt thus slip-  
ping hopelessly away were his power of  
moral resolve, and the necessary in-  
stinct of not leaving wife and children  
a burden upon others.

" O well for him whose will is strong !

But ill for him who, bettering not with  
time,

Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended  
Will,  
And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,  
Or seeming-genial venial fault,  
Recurring and suggesting still !  
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,  
Toiling in immeasurable sand,  
And o'er a weary sultry land,  
Far beneath a blazing vault,  
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill  
The city sparkles like a grain of salt."

It may, or may not have been, simple  
coincidence that the address to this  
" friend of his devoutest choice " was  
first printed on the very day, October  
4th, 1802, of that friend's marriage ;  
but it certainly gives an additional  
poignancy to the confessions therein  
contained. It may never be ascer-  
tained, as I have said, why Coleridge  
when he first admitted the ode into  
the collection of his acknowledged  
poems, the " Sibylline Leaves " in 1815,  
deposed the name of his old friend,  
omitted the lines that most signifi-  
cantly described him, and substituted  
the vague and unrecognisable name of  
" Lady." Should there be letters of  
Coleridge still existing which would  
throw light on the matter, Mr.  
Dykes Campbell, or other devout  
students of the poet, may yet discover  
something of interest on the subject.  
We know that an estrangement grew  
up between the two friends after these  
early days. Even had Wordsworth  
been without his defects (and he was  
" no such perfect thing "), this was  
inevitable ; and this may account  
for the revised version of the poem  
which still retained its original name  
of " Dejection." But more probably,  
I think, Coleridge desired to conceal  
from the general reader some of the  
more painful personal allusions and  
contrasts discoverable in the original  
version. Poetically, the ode has not  
suffered by the change. But as a  
contribution to the autobiography of  
one great poet, and a tribute of  
genuine admiration to another, the  
poem as first conceived will always  
have a peculiar interest to the student  
of Coleridge and Wordsworth.

ALFRED AINGER.

## LEOPARDI.

SINCE the year of his death, 1837, Leopardi has steadily won his way to a more exalted place among the writers of his own country, and to a wider recognition abroad. Niebuhr's prophecy, uttered in the preface to his "Merobaud," has been fulfilled; and Leopardi's fame acquires additional lustre every day. Critics of three nations have found three special points of interest in their study of the poet. Italians recognise Leopardi as an artist, perhaps the most perfect artist of this century. They find in his consummate mastery over language the resurrection of the grand manner: he recalls and continues the tradition of Dante. The German critics have been drawn to him by another aspect of his genius. The philosophical pessimism, formulated by Schopenhauer and developed by Von Hartmann, welcomes Leopardi as the singer of the movement; and rightly, for it is impossible for any one to say more than Leopardi has said upon misery, human and cosmical. Again, it is the psychological study of Leopardi as a man that has attracted the French to a consideration of the poet and his work. He presents so curious a problem in the growth of a soul that French curiosity has been piqued. It is the psychological tragedy of his life which fascinates the French critics: he is interesting as a fully developed case in spiritual pathology.

Each of these aspects of Leopardi's character, as a man, as philosopher, and as artist, call for attention. They hang together and cannot be separated. It is through the whole that we discern the outlines of this singular personality.

Giacomo Taldegrado Francesco Salesio Xaverio Pietro Leopardi was born June 30th, 1798, in the family palace at Recanati, a small town

in the Marches of Ancona, at that time a part of the Papal States, and not far from the famous shrine of Loreto. The family of Leopardi was among the most ancient in the city of Recanati. They settled there in the thirteenth century, and continued to flourish, filling the chief offices of their commune till the days of Giacomo, the sixteenth Leopardi, grandfather of the poet. Giacomo received the title of Count from Pope Benedict the Thirteenth, and died in 1781, leaving his son and heir, Monaldo, only five years old, and his family affairs seriously embarrassed by debt. Monaldo did not possess a vigorous character, and his father seems to have been aware of the fact, for by his will he directed that his son should not assume the management of the properties until he had reached the age of twenty-five. This instruction was not adhered to, however, and at eleven years of age Monaldo, in virtue of a Papal warrant, undertook the duties of head of his house. It was a difficult position in which he found himself; and, in a moment of unusual frankness, he acknowledged that he was unable to cope with the dangers. The creditors of the Leopardi estates, Jews of Perugia and Milan, began to press for payment. Nor were the necessary and daily expenses of the family inconsiderable. A passage from Monaldo's autobiography shows us the number of cadets, relations, and dependants—no less than fourteen—who, in accordance with Italian custom, looked to the family table for support. Count Monaldo was a gentle and weak-natured man, naively satisfied with himself. But he soon found that he was powerless to save the family from ruin. He took the wisest course in the circumstances, and

married a capable woman, Adelaide Marchesa Antici, two years his junior, and daughter of a neighbouring Recanatese family. The marriage took place in 1797, when Monaldo was just twenty-one. Adelaide was a powerful and determined woman, silently imposing her will, and not to be daunted from any enterprise to which she set her hand. Her daughter, Paolina, in a single touch gives us some measure of her quality. "Pietruccio," the girl writes one winter time to her brother, "is in bed with cold and fever; father has had a whole week of his usual fever; Luigi in bed with cold and fever; Mamma up and about with cold and fever." Adelaide thoroughly understood what she had undertaken to do. She applied the whole force of her character to rescue the property, and she succeeded at any rate in staving off immediate ruin. But she only succeeded by half starving the family and refusing any provision to her son. She does not often appear as actively interfering with the course of Giacomo's life; but she was always felt in the background, the most important factor in the case.

No doubt Monaldo was glad to hand the whole administration over to his wife. He was not at all unwilling to retire to his fine library: to immerse himself in archaeological and literary work, and to devote his attention to acquiring as many books as his wife would allow him to purchase. It was not until his sons were grown up that he saw how completely he had permitted himself to be effaced, and felt the need of hiding the fact from his children—a piece of cruel weakness which made the whole situation appear unintelligible and intolerable to Giacomo. Yet he was certainly kind-hearted, and loved his children truly, though he was powerless to do anything for them. He seldom travelled himself, and felt a morbid dread of the dangers of a journey or of a foreign city. "Do take care of the carriages," he writes to Giacomo at Rome; and

he was never happy while any of his sons were away from home. He was, however, perfectly unable to adopt a fixed attitude between his natural affection and his desire to preserve some semblance of paternal authority before his boys. And nothing could have been worse for the young men: they found their father, now soft and indulgent, now stern and reserved, with a mysterious sardonic smile which completely puzzled them, and threw Giacomo into paroxysms of rage, and finally into a rooted suspicion of his father and all his deeds. Perhaps the most mischievous part of this treatment was that Monaldo never spoke frankly to his sons. Giacomo did not know, until too late, how poor his family really was.

Giacomo was born to Monaldo and his wife in 1798. Other children followed in close succession: Carlo in 1799; Paolina in 1800; Luigi in 1804; and finally, in 1813, Pier Francesco, from whom descends the present Count Leopardi. It is Carlo, Paolina, and Luigi only, who are the companions of Giacomo's early years. The family life in the Leopardi palace went on in very sober fashion: the father in his library arranging his medals and vases, or playing at literature: the mother devoting the whole morning to her ledgers and bank-books, or to interviews with the factor and the lawyer. In the afternoon the family chariot came round to the door, and the Countess went in state to visit, though her neighbours' houses were often not a hundred yards from her own door. After the visits came the six regulation turns up and down the main street, and then home. What time she had to spare, was bestowed upon her books of devotion: she copiously annotated her fine library of prayers and litanies, and herself composed several Latin hymns. The whole family met at dinner: the father, the mother, children, uncles, and four or five priests; sometimes the Governor of Recanati or of Macerata came to dine. Occasionally, too, Ade-

laide's relations, the Antici, would pay her a visit; and the family plate and liveries would be brought out and furbished when the Cardinal Tommaso Antici, her uncle, or her brother Carlo, the head of the house, came to Recanati. A younger Antici, Rinaldo, was sometimes of the party: a curious, caustic-tempered man, who never read in the papers anything but the accidents, and kept a list of the killed.

The children passed the larger part of the day away from their parents, under the charge of the priests. Giacomo, Carlo, Luigi, and Paolina occupied a room opening out of their mother's. She herself used to dress them in the morning; and never during the whole course of their lives were the servants allowed near them. When the boys grew up, they were moved to a room immediately above their mother's, which could be reached only through hers. After breakfast, the children went to lessons in the school-room, arranged with four little tables, one behind the other. Lessons over, there was a walk with the tutor, and then dinner, where they met their father and mother. Adelaide never embraced her children; when they came into the room they kissed her hand; and Monaldo, in public at least, followed his wife in this cold and repressive treatment. After dinner, the children were allowed the greatest enjoyment of their day—half-an-hour's romp in their grandmother's rooms on the mezzanino of the palace. Their youth and spirits, however, could not be entirely crushed; and they contrived to extract some amusement out of their arid surroundings during the few moments that they were alone. Giacomo was famous for his stories of adventure, begun after the candles were put out in their bedroom, and continued for days and even weeks together. Giacomo himself was always the hero, under the name of Filzero, and his parents and his tutor, if he were out of favour, were made the butts of his youthful sarcasm and rage against circumstances, which even thus

early marked his character. Giacomo possessed a domineering spirit; and, half in anger, Carlo used to call him "Giacomo the overbearing." He always played the victorious general, and gave Carlo the part of buffoon, in the triumphal processions which he invented, making his brother pull him round the garden in an orange-tub for a car. Carlo took his revenge by playing his part, and heaping his brother with abuse; while Monaldo encouraged the game, as likely to nurture an antique spirit of hardness in his children.

The lessons went on vigorously as far as Giacomo was concerned, and the boy soon learned all the Latin and French that his tutors could teach him. The passion for knowledge was strong in him, and at ten years of age he began to study for himself in his father's library. The eight years which followed were the decisive period of his life. But they were years of silence. His published letters do not begin until 1816; and it is only from the bitter misery, which at once makes itself felt in these letters, that we gather any idea of the psychological tragedy which had been enacted inside the library walls. Giacomo possessed a strong intellect and a powerful brain. His brother bears witness to his singular physical precocity, which implied a sensitive and expectant condition of the affections. His own innate passion for learning directed him to a study of the classics; and during this process of study, the beauty of style and thought awoke the imagination before the boy had touched real life at any point. The imagination, seeking food, fastened on the sensitive and affectionate quality of his heart. He spun for himself a world of dreams, revelling in fancy, unaware, till too late, that he was entangling himself in a hopeless mesh, unfitting himself for any contact with the outer world of fact, and cutting the roots of virile action. Then his reason, always strong, asserted itself. It proved to him the hollowness of his dream-world,

the falsity of his hopes, the unreality of his dear illusions, upon which, as upon unstable foundations, he had unwittingly reared his Castle Joyous. And thus between his reason, which he hated and honoured, and his illusions, which he loved but could not keep, his life fell to ruins. He sank headlong through a void where was nothing but misery.

His reason and imagination in their mutual antagonism rendered him impotent. Faith and hope, which might have saved him by lending him patience, by compelling him to accept his illusions on the ground that life is life, whether it be illusion or not, by softening and rendering elastic the rigid borders of his understanding, by refuting and proving illogical the pure logic of his intellect—faith and hope he lost: one through his own impatient haste, the other through the tyranny of circumstance. He devoted the fruits of his earliest study to a treatise on the popular errors of the ancients, religious and other, and he closed his essay with a claim for dogma and an infallible Church. But doubt once set in motion, could not rest. The religious faith of his childhood fell to pieces before the same criticism which had exposed the fallacy in earlier forms of belief. In his impatience and his pain Leopardi would not wait in the hope of acquiring a wider faith and on the chance of a resurrection. He summed up against all faith, and his pure reason did not say No. His hope he lost as he slowly perceived the necessity which kept him fast bound to Recanati, and the family home. Leopardi knew perfectly well how imperative was the need that he should touch the outer world if he were to be saved: on this point, at least, his vision was perfectly clear. But his mother would not allow a penny to be spent in supporting a son in the world, when he might stay at home for half the price; nor could his father endure the thought of his children leaving him. Leopardi watched his prospects of release dying away year by year. He was a prisoner

inside the library walls; a prey to "his executioners," Reason and Imagination, who gathered strength hourly, and whose conflict inside him grew fiercer with their growing strength. When liberty came at last, in his twenty-fifth year, it came too late. His physical health was ruined: his spiritual self had lost all capacity for fruitful contact with the outer world of life.

This tragedy proceeded slowly, and in silence. Monaldo, sitting in his library, saw nothing but his little boy bending over huge folios of the Fathers, puzzling out the Greek for himself, then attacking Hebrew. He did not even notice, till the mischief was done, that Giacomo's shoulders were growing round and his back humped. Under his father's encouragement, Giacomo began to study the Greek authors in chronological order, amassing that vast erudition which his profound memory held always at his disposal, observing points of style, noting Greek methods of composition, devoting time and labour to exercises in philology, to everything in short that might perfect his acquaintance with language. Carlo records that many times he woke late at night, and saw Giacomo on his knees before the table in their bedroom writing by the last flicker of a dying candle. The fury of study had taken firm hold on the boy. He never threw away a moment: even while his sheet of manuscript was drying he would learn an English or a German verb. In 1814 he presented to his delighted father the first fruits of his labours—a Greco-Latin edition of the "Life of Plotinus," by Porphyry. On the back of the manuscript Monaldo wrote: "The 31st August, 1814, my eldest son presented me this, his work. He has never had a master in Greek, and is sixteen years, two months, and two days old." Then followed numerous translations and commentaries—Hesychius, Cælius Aristides, Fronto, Dion Chrysostome, in prose; and more ambitious efforts in verse—the *Batrachomyomachia*, the *Idylls* of

Moschus, the First Book of the *Odyssey*, and the second of the *Aeneid*. The young artist attacked language as a sculptor attacks marble. He studied the qualities of his material, and acquired mastery and a style while waiting for a subject which was to come only too soon and too imperiously. In 1815 he finished his essay on the Popular Errors of the Ancients ; and it is not uninteresting to note that he had read Sir Thomas Browne. We have seen how important this earliest original work proved to be in the course of Leopardi's psychical development, awakening the spirit which attacked, and finally destroyed, his faith. But more than that : however unsatisfactory the treatment of the whole subject may appear, the exquisite language of the preface and of the closing chapter proves that Leopardi had already obtained a command over Italian, and had acquired his clear, forcible, inimitable manner.

The intensity of Leopardi's studies began to undermine his health. A growing boy could not bend all day over felios and sit up half the night with impunity. His eyes showed signs of suffering from this incessant application. His father was blind to these ominous symptoms, and Giacomo himself disregarded them. He drove impetuously forward upon his career of self-development ; he accumulated seven volumes of literary and philosophical notes, and believed that he saw a scholar's fame waiting to crown his course. But his eyesight grew steadily worse. On many evenings he was obliged to escape from the light of the drawing-room and to hide himself in some dark corner of the ante-chamber, where Carlo would find him "glaring like a little lion," and growling at every sound of laughter which reached him from the neighbouring saloons. Nothing seems to have been done for him. He was left to battle with the pain and the mischief alone, and finally he succumbed. Writing to his friend Count Pepoli some time afterwards, he describes this period with a brevity and coldness of

language which heighten rather than conceal the misery of his situation. "In this library," he writes of himself in the third person, "he passed the greater part of his life, as long and as far as his health, which was destroyed by his studies, would allow him. He learned Greek, and devoted himself entirely to philosophy. He followed it up for seven years, until his eyesight was ruined, and he was forced to pass a whole year without reading. Then he turned to speculation."

Giacomo was barely twenty years old. He had never been outside his father's house unattended by a priest : his whole constitution was disturbed at its nervous centres by excessive study : his digestion was enfeebled, and his eyesight injured for the present. It would have been impossible to choose a more unfortunate moment in which to philosophise his views of life. Yet the forced inactivity of the year 1819 opened the door of speculation to his powerful intellect. Hitherto Giacomo had been living chiefly in the region of the fancy : his reason now claimed its voice, and compelled him to consider the problem of his own unhappiness. The ever-present sense of absolute misery and ill-being which belongs to nervous disorders now seemed to him the one solid fact in existence. His reason came into play. It fastened upon his misery, as his imagination had fastened on his natural affection : it undertook to analyse his unhappiness, and it received every assistance from his acute sensibility. He felt deeply, and he felt that he was miserable. He dwelt upon his misery, until it transcended the limits of individuality and assumed the proportions of universality. His reason, bursting all bounds, dogmatised existence as miserable, and demonstrated the illusory and unsatisfactory nature of each object of human aspiration, of love, of glory, of virtue : it was now in direct and deadly conflict with the imagination.

But his reason having thus destroyed the happy dreams, the imagination

itself became a gainer. His doctrine of cosmic unhappiness and universal vanity itself received a tincture of the imaginative quality, and assumed the dignity of an idea. It became, in short, a subject capable of artistic treatment ; and this accounts for the fact that Leopardi, while he dreaded the reason and considered it a destroying flood against which men should, if possible, build up barriers, yet welcomed with a sort of sombre enthusiasm the hated conclusions to which his reason forced him. That ardour was the effect of the imagination in him endeavouring to save itself through the doorway of art : making its gain out of the very quality which threatened to starve it. Reason and imagination in their strife condemned the man to unhappiness ; but their joint action raised the arid conclusions of the pure understanding to the dignity of an artistic subject, within whose limits both qualities found full play. In all the technique of his art Leopardi was ready. His style was formed and waiting for the subject which was now presented to it. Subject and style came together in a kind of spiritual marriage : imagination "flames in the arms of its antagonist," reason ; and the poet sings his immortal song.

This is the close of Giacomo's period of growth. He was now a finished man : his powers were co-ordinated, and had found a medium in which they might work together. The fly had been taken : outward circumstances might modify him, but the inner man would remain unaltered. And the whole of this development had taken place in silence, within the four walls of a library—unknown and uncared for, without the touch of a friend's hand or the comfort of a woman's kiss. But Giacomo was still young, and, like Rhaicos in Landor's "Hamadryad," he listened to the old man reason, yet wanted proof. During the solitude of his blind year, the irrepressible instincts of the natural youth asserted themselves in the teeth of reason : he desired to see and to

know for himself. He asked his father to give him an allowance and to let him go out into the world, but Monaldo replied by treating him like a child who did not know what was for his own good. He never told his son the real ground for his refusal—that he had not the money to give him, and that the mother held the strings of the family purse. Giacomo could not understand his father's conduct. He urged that at twenty-one the eldest sons of houses apparently poorer than their own were provided for. Monaldo received his expostulations with a cold thin smile, and recommended him to his books, or suggested the Church as a suitable opening for a young man of Giacomo's physical qualities and social position. This treatment nearly drove the young man out of his senses. The turmoil inside himself, the iron bars that confined him, his own impotence against them, threw him into a profound melancholy. "I think if I were to go mad now, my madness would consist in sitting with my hands upon my knees, my mouth open, my eyes staring all day long, without laughing, or weeping, or moving."

In the middle of all this misery, Giacomo found one consolation in his correspondence and friendship with Giordani. Giordani's attention had been called to Giacomo's translation of the *Aeneid*, published at Milan in 1817, and he had at once recognised the artistic merits of the author. A long and warm correspondence ensued between the old man and the young one. It was chiefly from Giordani that Giacomo caught the patriotic fervour which inspired his earliest odes "All' Italia," "Sopra il Monumento di Dante," and "Ad Angelo Mai." In one of his letters to Giordani, he writes with enthusiasm, "But my fatherland is Italy; for her I burn with love, and thank heaven for having made me Italian." But this patriotic outburst did not long retain its keen and youthful note, though the political character of Giacomo's last poem, the "Ginestra,"

proves that he was loath to part with it. His inexorable reason killed the emotion and labelled it among the illusions. Nor does it seem to have had its roots in the deepest part of the man's nature. His patriotism was rather a fine subject for rhetoric: magnificent rhetoric of invective or of aspiration, but always rhetoric. Yet his friendship with Giordani, and the enthusiasm for Italy which it aroused, brought him into trouble. He published his patriotic odes in Bologna, and the result was that the Austrian censorship in North Italy condemned the volume; while, on the other hand, their author received a letter congratulating him on having joined the Carbonari. This letter not unnaturally alarmed Monaldo, and made him more unwilling than ever to allow Giacomo to leave home. At the same time Monaldo wrote to Bologna for copies of the condemned poems, and proposed that Giacomo should allow him to revise them and to excise the dangerous passages. The prospect of seeing his work rehandled by another hurt all Giacomo's pride as an artist, and the paternal censorship made him furious. He declined his father's offer, and their relations fell back into their previous state, with suspicion heightened on both sides.

In September, 1818, Giordani came to visit his friend at Recanati. He was not slow to perceive that Giacomo must enjoy more liberty, and ought to mix with the world if he was to avoid utter ruin. He did not see, however, that it was already too late. Giordani undertook to speak to Monaldo on the subject, and proposed various expedients by which Giacomo might be enabled to go to Rome; but it was to no purpose. All Giordani's schemes were rejected; and after his friend's departure Giacomo wrote to him: "Our affairs go from bad to worse. After trying to put into effect that plan for going to Rome which we discussed together, and having suggested a device so easy of accomplishment that, even had one wished to do so, it would have

been impossible to discover any objection, after all we find ourselves abandoned, mocked, treated like boobies or madmen, or naughty children, and quietly derided as babes by our father." At length *ennui* and depression became intolerable, and Giacomo determined to fly from Recanati. A passport was necessary, and he wrote to the Governor of Macerata, Count Saverio Broglie, to send him one. By accident Broglie mentioned to Giacomo's uncle, Antici, that his nephew was about to leave Recanati. Antici wrote to Monaldo, wishing Giacomo all success on going into the world, and so the scheme came to the father's ears. Monaldo said nothing to his son, but wrote to Broglie to send him the passport, and Broglie did so. Meantime Giacomo continued his preparations. He was without money, and saw no hope of obtaining any. He determined to break open his father's strong box and to take as much as he thought absolutely necessary to prevent him from starving on the road. Nothing can be more touching than the long letter in which the poor boy tried to justify this act to the father whom he was wronging. There is a mixture of bitter resentment at the usage he had received, and of piteous appeals for forgiveness and kind thoughts. To Carlo also Giacomo wrote, explaining the imperious need which drove him to this flight, and concluding with a hope that his action might open their parent's eyes to the wrong he was inflicting on his sons. Both the letters were placed in Giacomo's drawer, to be found after his departure; and he waited day by day for the passport which never came to his hands. When Monaldo received the enclosure from Broglie, he sent for Giacomo, told him that he knew all, and placed the passport (these are the Count's own words) in an open cupboard, telling him that he might take it when he chose. And so all finished. Giacomo heard nothing but mockery in his father's permission. His last hope had failed, and he was utterly broken down.

The fact, however, was beginning to penetrate Monaldo's mind that Giacomo was not quite like all the other Leopardi, his ancestors : that he could not rest contented in the family home, and that sooner or later he must be allowed his wings. But there were two years of waiting yet to be passed, and these years Giacomo spent in estrangement from his father, wrapt in the gloomiest forebodings, looking at the ruin of his life's happiness which he at least surmised to be complete. His letters teem with terrible lamentations over his lost youth, which meant for him the period of belief in illusions : the days when desire and the hope of attainment were not yet divorced. He writes of his "gigantic capacity for suffering," of his "mad imagination" which reduced him to a state of "black and solid melancholy." "I cast myself on the ground and writhe, demanding how much longer I am to live," he says. "I write with a heart so closed and quivering with despair." Once during this period and twice in later life there appears to have been a return of lucid and happier moments, but they were very brief. He shall describe one for himself :

"I too am fervently sighing for the lovely spring, as the only preservative which remains against the extinction of my very soul. And some few evenings ago my bed-room window chanced to be wide open. Before I undressed I leaned and looked out upon a cloudless sky and delicate moonlight : I felt the air caressing, and I heard the dogs baying, far away. Then there awoke in me some fancies of long ago. I thought I felt a throbbing of my heart which forced me into tears, like a fool. I prayed for the pity of Nature, whose voice I seemed to hear after so long a time. And at that moment, as I cast a glance upon my past condition, which would certainly return immediately, as indeed it did, I froze to ice with horror ; for I could not understand how man may bear this life without illusions and quick affections ; without imagination and without enthusiasm. Only a year ago these were my very existence, and made me so happy in spite of my misfortunes ; now I am dry and parched as any withered reed. And never again shall any passion find the door of this unhappy heart. For me the very power of love, eternal and supreme, is cancelled and annulled."

But even while he writes, the black

veil of melancholy and despair settles down once more. He thought of suicide, but decided against it. "I should not desire to live, but, being obliged to live, what avails it to kick against necessity ! Nothing remains for me but patience, and that I was not born to." His hour of liberation, however, had come at length ; but it had been delayed so long that it came too late. In 1822 Monaldo at last determined with the consent of Adelaide, to send his son to Rome, on the distinct understanding that he was to establish himself in the Church, which offered rapid promotion to young noblemen. Giacomo left Recanati to the infinite sorrow of Carlo and Paolina, who saw the last consolation that made life endurable departing in their brother's carriage. Paolina writes to tell him that she ran down the lanes after him, trying to catch the last sound of his wheels : Carlo passed the night raving about his room, and in the early morning rushed out of doors to borrow money that he might follow his brother. Both retained the deepest affection for Giacomo ; but he had now passed out of their lives.

I have dwelt at length on Giacomo's early life, because it was during these years that the man was made. He never grew after he left Recanati : spiritually, he lived and died inside his father's walls. His later work shows no advance upon the dogmatic conclusions at which he had arrived before he was twenty : there are no signs of liberation from the narrow intensity of his pessimism. The pain he suffered in that "terrible night of Recanati" engraved every detail of his native place deep into his mind. The landscape of his poems is the landscape of a hill-city in the Marches : the distant sea on one side, the distant Apennines and the snowy Gran Sasso on the other : at its feet the undulating plain. Giacomo could not bear his Florentine lodgings, because from his windows "he never saw the horizon." There can be little doubt that the wide spaces of the sky which

he felt about him in his high-perched home, helped him unconsciously to form that width and sweep of style which marks his poetry ; and Carlo was right when he said that "Giacomo's most beautiful work was thought and written at Recanati." Here, leaving Giacomo on the threshold of the world, will be the best place to consider the results in philosophic conclusions and in artistic power which he had attained during his years of growth.

As a philosopher Leopardi has acquired a high reputation ; but his fame is a tribute to the power of style quite as much as to the power of logic. He states his conclusions with compulsive directness, but veils the steps which lead him to adopt them. These steps were taken in the region of feeling ; and the reason was called in merely to sign the warrants, the truth of which his emotion had tested and affirmed. In short, Leopardi was not a philosopher at all, in the sense of the logician who constructs a system. But his intellect was so powerful, and his loyalty to truth so unflinching, that his conclusions carry conviction as far as they go : while the beauty of the language in which they are expressed is likely to hide the fact that they do not reach far enough, that they never pierce to the region of faith or hope, that the ethical factor is ignored, and that they do not proceed from a sufficiently broad basis. There was a want of balance in Leopardi's psychical structure. The region of the sense, the motive power of life, had never received its fair share of nutrition, or may have been too weak to take it : at all events it had never acquired the muscle of fact which would have enabled it to grapple with a tyrannous reason. It has been seen how his imagination magnified his misery until it reached the dimensions of universality and the region where a philosophical statement becomes possible ; how his reason then stepped in and dogmatised upon this single point, which to Leopardi appeared the only point. He analysed

his own aspirations for love, for life, for glory, and had no difficulty in finding that in his own case they failed to satisfy or to be satisfied. Proceeding beyond himself, but still following the same line of inquiry, he found it equally easy to conclude that for all men these aspirations are illusory ; for he persisted in considering objects of desire as ends in themselves, and he had grasped the true fact that the attainment of objects of desire will not satisfy. A theory of compensation for pain, or the possibility of converting pain, of using it as a force, never entered into his scheme. He ignored the ethical aspect of philosophy, and he refused to apply any other measuring-rod to life than that of individual happiness and satisfaction—the things he most desired but least possessed.

In a letter to his friend M. de Sinner, Leopardi has indignantly protested against the explanation of his philosophical views by the peculiar circumstances of his own case. It hurt his pride to think that men should decline to recognise the universality of his doctrines and regard them merely as cries of a wounded soul and a ruined life. But we need not deny universality to Leopardi's conclusions as far as they go, while at the same time we give due weight to his circumstances. Leopardi had grasped and expressed, as no one else has done, a truth of life. Our only objection is that one truth must not be taken for the whole truth.

It is not easy to summarise the philosophy of Leopardi. It is scattered through all his work : every page is steeped in the emotion of its sombre conclusions ; but nowhere is it stated precisely. The poems and the "Operette Morali," however, contain the pith of Leopardi's views. The "Operette Morali" are a series of dialogues, almost invariably treating of human unhappiness. Leopardi himself is usually one of the interlocutors under some fictitious name, just as he is the Consalvo, or the Brutus, or the Sappho of the poems. In these works

we get a picture of the author under various moods of feeling, drawn with his admirable clearness and truth. Leopardi's own emotions are magnified until they fill the sphere of existence and return upon the reader with the power of universal aspects of humanity.

Nature, in his view, is a power superior and indifferent to man: careless of his suffering or his fate: bending and using him for her own objects and interests which are not his. This doctrine is illustrated by the story of the Icelander, who, learning early in life that positive happiness was unattainable, determined to secure the negative happiness of tranquillity. For this purpose he gave way on every point to all his neighbours: offending no one, thwarting no one. But the more he yielded, the more they encroached, and threatened to rob him of all he possessed. He therefore abandoned the dwellings of men, and built a hut on the slopes of Heckla. But here Nature proved as cruel a foe as ever man had been. Earthquakes overthrew his house, snow broke down the roof, torrents swept him away, frost nipped and fire burned. It was the same in every climate and in every zone. Nature was always his foe; nor could he fly from her as from his other enemy, man. At length, after endless wanderings, he found himself alone in the middle of Sahara. Before him, far across the sand, leaned the bust and head of a woman, huge and prone upon the earth. At first he thought it was some colossal Sphinx, but on drawing nearer he saw that it was a living woman. Her countenance was both terrible and grand: her hair and eyes of deepest black; and she looked at him fixedly. It was Nature, from whom he had fled all his life. They talked, and the Icelander asked Nature why she is so cruel to man whom she has created and for whom she is responsible. Then Nature answered: "You seem to have forgotten that the life of this universe is a perpetual cycle of production and destruction.

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The two are bound together in such a way that each continually serves the other, and thus the world is maintained." "Yes," replied the Icelander, "I have heard all philosophers say the same. But since that which is destroyed suffers, and that which destroys feels no pleasure, and will itself presently perish, tell me—what no philosopher has ever told me—for whose happiness or gain does this most miserable life of the universe exist, preserved through the death and destruction of all things which compose it?" Before Nature could make answer, two lean and hungry lions tore the Icelander in pieces and ate him, and so preserved their lives for that day. Others, however, affirm that a whirlwind swept across the desert and buried the Icelander under a noble mausoleum of sand. Which ever tale be true the vital question goes echoing down the empty spaces of this Sahara of speculation, and dies away unanswered. Leopardi would not venture on any reply.

All existence is miserable, not only through the hostility of Nature but in its very essence. As long as we exist we desire happiness, and happiness is unattainable. It is not a thing, but an illusion. Yet life can be made endurable by illusions of happiness; and they belong to youth, they are "the blessed flame of youth," and die with it. Or it can be made durable by absolute pain and suffering, which induce us to think well of past moments when these were absent, and to look forward to release from them as to a positive pleasure, which, of course, it is not. Each aspiration of humanity when brought to the touchstone of experience proves illusory. Parini demolishes all hopes of permanent glory. Theophrastus on his death-bed inveighs against fame. Brutus declares virtue an *ignis-fatuus*. Giacomo's own life demonstrated the illusion which underlies love. The human race is utterly corrupt and vile. It always was so, and continues to be so, as Prometheus found to his cost. At a prize-giving in the

city of Hypernephelus, Prometheus felt aggrieved that, while Vulcan received a reward for an excellent pot he had made, man, Prometheus' invention, did not win even a word of praise. He backed the excellence of his creature against Momus for a large sum ; and the two went down to earth to settle the bet. In America they lighted on a village of cannibals : in India on a Suttee. "Wait a moment," cried Prometheus, "these are not civilised men." They went to London and followed a crowd into a house where a wealthy man had just shot his children and then himself, and bequeathed his dog to a friend. Prometheus paid the bet.

But man being utterly vile, and with no hope of redemption, nature hostile, and existence misery, why not commit suicide ? The question is argued out in two dialogues—"Porphyry and Plotinus" and "Tristan and a Friend"—with rather less than Leopardi's usual precision and acuteness of idea. The chief reason against suicide is, of course, the terrible doubt that we may not be annihilated ; that the sleep of death may possibly imply dreaming. Plato is to blame for having robbed death of its sweetness by suggesting such doubts. Leopardi was not of a mind with Sir Thomas Browne when that sturdy philosopher said, "I do not so much fear death as I am ashamed of it." That is the remark of a man who bases his philosophy on life itself. Leopardi's pessimism could lead to no other conclusion than annihilation ; and the doubt as to the possibility of annihilation is its weakest point. If annihilation is impossible the whole of the pessimistic teaching, from Cakya-mouni to Hartmann, falls. The pessimist must invert St. Paul's text and say, If Christ be not dead then are we of all men most wretched. This dialogue closes with a noble speech by Plotinus, dwelling on the need and the duty of living.

"Let us live, my Porphyry, and comfort one another ; let us not refuse to bear that

portion of human pain which destiny has allotted to us. Rather let us see to it that we hold one another company ; encouraging one another on our way, and lending a hand of succour one to another. And so we shall conclude as well may be this labour of life ; which without doubt shall not be long. And when death comes, then we shall never grieve for it ; and moreover in these last moments our friends and companions shall comfort us ; and this thought shall be for cheer to us that, though we be spent, they many times shall recall us to their hearts, nor ever cease to think of us with love."

There is a sweet and gentle note of resignation in this passage that makes us wonder whether there were not some qualities of patience and affection in his heart which Leopardi had not sounded to their depths. But the impatient tone breaks out once more in the next dialogue ; and Tristan cries that man is made a cuckold by life and Nature, who are faithless to him, though he persists in loving. Yet this dialogue, too, ends in a noble strain of acquiescent waiting for death, which might have been written by some monk in his cloister of Vallambrosa or Alernia. There is no finer passage in Leopardi's work than this last speech of Tristan's : "To-day I envy none ; nor wise nor foolish ; nor great nor small ; nor weak nor powerful. I envy the dead ; and with them alone would I change my state. If death shall come to me I will die with such tranquillity and content as though I had never known another hope or desire upon earth." These are the phrases of a monk's aspiration, thrown out, not towards a future heaven which lends them all their meaning, but cast upon a void where neither hope nor despair nor any human emotion finds a place : the last stretchings of the soul's arms to clasp a substance, inclosing nothing but empty air.

Making all allowances for the influence of his misfortunes, Leopardi seems to have erred in adopting too rigid a point of view. There is something unphilosophical in the attitude of his mind : in the narrow and microscopically accurate examination of individual moments, emotions, aspirations, while

ignoring their relation to the whole in which alone their real value is to be found. He would not see that nothing makes man feel the iron hand of necessity but resistance; nor, when that hand pressed heavily upon him, would he take the door of escape and convert "You must" into "I will." Yet at the close of the "*Ginestra*," the last words he ever wrote, Leopardi recants his attitude of pride, and retires to a position, not of acquiescent will, but of silent submission, wrung by force of over-mastering destiny. The delicate broom blowing on the barren slopes of Vesuvius, is his pattern and his text. It grows where the lava stream will some day surely flow; and when that comes—

" Piegherài

Sotto il fascio mortal non renitente  
Il tuo capo innocente:  
Ma non piegato insino allora indarno  
Codar damente supplicando inanzi  
Al futuro opressor: ma non eretto  
Con forsennato orgoglio inver le stelle."

" Ma più saggia, ma tanto  
Meno inferna del 'nom, quanto le frali  
Tue stirpi non credesti  
O dal fato o da te fatte immortali."

It is in Leopardi the artist that we find the most complete expression of the whole man. His art was his master passion; and in studying that we are brought into closest contact with the very self of the poet. The technique of his art had fascinated him in earliest boyhood: his letters are full of eager criticism on methods of writing, on the value of words and the capabilities of language. He is an artist of minute fastidiousness; and demands from his audience that close attention which he himself bestowed on every word and phrase. His vein is not full to overflowing, bursting out against his will, and regardless of form, as in poets like Byron. There

1 "Then shalt thou bow beneath the fatal load, with no resistance, thine innocent head, not bowed before in vain and cowardly supplication unto the coming tyrant, nor yet held star-high in madness of pride. But wiser far, and far less weak than man in that thou hast not thought thy tender leaves by fate or by thy power were made immortal."

is an inherent delay in his process of composing. Leopardi knew himself thoroughly, and this characteristic had not escaped his notice: he even talks of himself as possessing "a difficult and infecund nature." A letter written by him to his cousin Melchiorri, explains his method of working in verse, and proves the elaborate attention he was willing to bestow upon form. "In writing I have never obeyed anything but an inspiration or frenzy; and when that comes upon me, in two minutes I have cast the form and the distribution of all the parts. This done, I always wait until another moment of inspiration returns, which rarely happens until after some months. Then I set myself to work on the composition, so slowly that it is impossible for me to finish even the smallest poem in less than two or three weeks." Leopardi had only one subject, and that was ever present with him—was, in fact, himself. What he had to wait for was the inspiration of style, not the inspiration of thought. As a poet he made the conclusions of his philosophy serve as the theme of his song. The conclusions themselves, however forcible they may be, are of secondary importance when compared with the manner in which they were expressed. We have seen how these conclusions were reached through feeling, imagination, and reason. There was something so fascinating in their coldness and their vast proportions, that Leopardi the artist at once perceived their capacity as a subject. Cosmical ruin is hardly less stimulating to the poetic imagination than cosmical edification.

But this subject of cosmical ruin would appear, at first sight, unmanageable. A poet of nullity seems like a contradiction in terms. The belief in the universal vanity and everlasting falsity of all we see and cling to, implies a renunciation of the usual poetic material,—the passions, the aspirations, the fulness and richness of life. By submission to his philosophical conclusions the poet limited the

matter of his art to a single idea, which possessed no other quality than that of cold and colourless form. And hence arises the difficulty experienced on first looking into Leopardi. The reader's mind and emotions are undoubtedly influenced : a mood is created : there is a strong hand upon him. And yet it is hard to say why he feels all this. Sympathy with human passion and action is not fostered : it is mocked. Instead of a rich and varied world there is a void presented to us. Beauty of individual things, beauty of the human form, beauty of character, beauty of nature, beauty which we expect the poets to bring near to us is eliminated ; and instead there is offered to us the passionless beauty of this frigid idea, "terrible, but dear."

Leopardi is undoubtedly an artist of the highest power. But what sort of artist ? By the very nature of his subject and the character of his philosophy, he could not be a didactic poet. He could teach nothing. More logical than Cakya-mouni, than Schopenhauer, than Hartmann, he saw that teaching implies a desire, though that desire be nothing else than the extinction of desires. He went with these philosophers in holding desire to be universal, and also synonymous with pain ; but, as a remedy, he has nothing to propose, for he knew that any remedy must imply some conception of a final cause, and therefore must admit the ideal ; and his iron reason, in its perpetual and angry contest with his imagination, refused to nod to any ideal. Nor could Leopardi be a dramatic poet, for two reasons. His external circumstances prevented him from ever acquiring an intimate knowledge of men in action and passion ; while his dogmas cut at the root of actions on the score of their futility, and mocked at passion on the score of its falsity and its illusory nature. Yet the tragic note is not wanting in Leopardi's attitude and work. In this respect he resembles Lucretius, whose great poem he once

thought of continuing. In both these poets there is one element of the tragic, a sense of the gigantic forces against which man must combat, and which will overwhelm him all the same. But the other factor, the struggling human heart, is absent. It is useless to paint a conflict where the issues are inevitable ; where all the virtue displayed by one of the actors is doomed to have no effect upon the result. There must be an ethical outlet. A tragedy is meaningless unless the possibilities of victory depend on the action of the combatants. In short, it requires two to make a tragedy ; and Leopardi sends only one actor on the stage.

In neither didactic nor dramatic poetry did Leopardi attempt to work. But he believed that he possessed satiric qualities. The Greek satirists attracted his attention during his student days ; and he had translated Simonides and the *Batrachomyomachia* of Homer. His longest original poem is a continuation of the *Batrachomyomachia* from the point where Homer ceases. It is a satire on the political condition of Italy : the patriots, the Austrians and the papal government all figure in the poem. But the same reasons which prevented Leopardi from attempting dramatic composition should have stayed his hand here. He did not possess sufficient knowledge of men ; and it is upon a wide acquaintance with the world that satiric no less than dramatic poetry must be based. It is doubtful whether Leopardi really possessed the satiric qualities. Satire is ruined if it is not bold and intelligible : Leopardi is often obscure, and never bold. A dash of humour certainly did exist in Leopardi's character : there is humour in the lines of his face and there was humour in the way in which he would meet distasteful company and talk with a rap on his box, a pinch of snuff and a lift of the shoulders. He possessed too a sort of grim and bitter irony, wrung from him chiefly by his own despair, and a power of impatient and scornful in-

vective together with a minute sarcasm. But he used these rather as outlets for his misery than as qualities inherent in his composition which he could turn to account in his work. Neither his humour nor his irony had that width and penetration which would have made them of use to him as a satiric poet.

Leopardi was essentially a lyrist. He is of those who learn in suffering what they teach in song. He was made a poet by his own suffering: his subject and his field of observation is himself. He could not, therefore, be other than a lyrist. It remains to be seen what qualities he possessed within the lyric region. Remembering always that the burden of his song was the perpetual hostility of the natural powers to man, universal vanity, cosmical unhappiness, we see that there is the play of a powerful imagination in the very construction of this idea. It is the imagination that gives form to this conception, which in itself threatens to become chaotic. The imagination brings it within the region of art and renders it susceptible of receiving form. The vision of the comets speeding on their solitary way, bearing with them for ever in their aerial flight, the consciousness of misery; or again, the colossal sphinx-woman Nature, couched in solitude on the sands of Sahara, are touches of the same imaginative power. But in Leopardi this quality differs from the vague, un-outlined vision of the northern poets, vast and undefined. He is Greek not Gothic: sharp and lucid in outline as a crystal: vast and yet defined. It is the rare combination of these two qualities which give the note and the value of Leopardi's imagination. It is not to be expected that, with a conception of life which ignored details, and a theme which dealt with the very outskirts of existence, there should be room in Leopardi's poetry for a rich and varied presentation of life. Yet, where it is necessary for his purpose, where he wishes to turn

from woman's beauty to her worthlessness, from Nature's calm and loveliness to human misery, where he desires to heighten his point by a rhetorical contrast, Leopardi can paint with minuteness, truth and vigour, and in the manner of purest realism. This rhetorical counterbalancing of emotions is so common a device of the poet that it will be sufficient to refer to three passages in proof of what is here advanced, the opening of "La Quiet," the opening of the terrible poem "Aspasia" and the delicate "Tramonto della Luna." There is another power of presentation which we may expect Leopardi to possess, and which he does possess to a remarkable degree,—the power of presenting a mood. The majority of his poems are pictures of moods. The patriotic vein flows through the Odes to Italy, on the monument to Dante, to Angelo Mia, and on his sister's wedding. The splendour and the aspirations of patriotism ring through the intoxicating rhetoric of his verse. It is no wonder that the patriots welcomed him, and that Novara owed in part, to him, her battalions of volunteers. Or again the passionate love that never won a kiss, until too late, inspires the sorrow of "Consalvo." The fury of love, rejected and mocked, rages in "Aspasia." The bitter-sweet remembrance of earliest love that dies ungrasped and unfulfilled, breathes sadness through "Le Ricordanze." The notes of despair, scorn, revolt, submission, sound upon every page. In Leopardi's last poem "La Ginestra," the smallness of man, the coldness of Nature, the vanity of boasted progress, the abysmal gulf that waits for all, colour the mood of his farewell to life.

It is moods that Leopardi presents; but he presents them by no ordinary means. He presents them not by the thought, not by imagery, not by the contents of his poems; but by language as pure language and nothing else. Leopardi extracts the mood out of Nature, or out of the personality

upon which he is dwelling, and imposes it again upon his reader through the medium of his language. Leopardi is (and, as we read him, we too become) Brutus sitting among the ruins of a life; or the Asiatic shepherd awake among his sleeping flocks, flinging the question of human destiny up to the wandering moon. The direct presentation of pictures, all the plastic imagery of the poets, he leaves on one side; and in this sense he is a poet's poet, and counts upon awaking the imagination of his reader by creating the mood in which he himself writes. Leopardi is supremely an artist in words. He uses language as a vehicle for feeling and thought, not indirectly through the meaning conveyed, but directly through the sound, the weight, the cadence of his phrases. He trusts to modify his reader through his rhetoric; and therefore he ought to be read aloud if he is to achieve his full effect. It is in the very words, in the use and place of words, in the balance and force of phrase, that we must look for Leopardi: not in the thought, not in the meaning conveyed; for the poet by the force of passionate feeling has driven himself through these into the very words themselves. This is the secret of his power. Poets, as a rule, modify as much by their thought as by their language; and we are able to distinguish the one from the other, and to criticise their mutual propriety. Leopardi modifies us by his language alone. Emotion, thought, the whole creator is there, and not to be separated from his language. The force of the man is in his singleness. He possessed one subject which contained sufficient truth to give it weight, and he possessed an incomparable style. The subject and the style were fused together by his artistic power; and the whole moves forward, fascinating, beautiful, deadly as a glacier, with the pure and crystalline form of its ice-falls and the terrible desolation of its moraines.

These were the qualities which Leopardi possessed and this was the

constitution of his character when he went out into the world. We left him on the point of departure from Recanati, a full-grown man. The world which he sought could teach him nothing, for he did not come to it docile; and all that remained of his life was merely one long demonstration of his own misfortunes. But he had not abandoned the hope that he might find a wider sphere and a fuller life in the great world which he was about to enter: he still believed that he might find love and happiness among women. His letters to his brother Carlo prove how ardently he looked for this. But his ruined health, his empty purse, and his meagre person, placed him at serious practical disadvantages. He had a worse enemy in his own imagination. He had idealised women and love: it was not possible that the fact should answer to his preconception. "I have an absolute need of love, love, love, fire, enthusiasm, life. I think the world was never made for me." But the love he cried for was never on earth. It was the "dream-love," which he himself describes: some full and burning moment of all the faculties, which his imagination might picture but which he could never grasp. And so, as his conviction grew upon him, his letters on the subject ran coldly, or burst every now and then into fiery or bitter abuse, for which his misery must plead exculpation.

Leopardi was not more fortunate in his efforts to obtain a place; and his parents showed no signs of readiness to support him away from home. His mother said that his literature ought to be a "mine of gold" for him. He steadily refused to go into the Church; and his determination rendered all the good offices of such powerful friends as Niebuhr and Bunsen unavailing. Consalvi, the Cardinal Secretary, put him off with promises which were never kept, and hopes which led to nothing. Before long he was anxious to be home again.

Sick at heart, frozen with cold, weary of Rome and its hollow society, more than ever convinced that happiness was not for him, he looked back almost with affection upon Recanati. He tells Carlo that the only pleasure he has known in Rome were the tears he shed at Tasso's grave: "they only know the joy of weeping for whom the fountain of tears has been a long time sealed."

In the middle of 1823 Leopardi returned home, and stayed there till June, 1825. He then left for Milan to fulfil an obligation to the publisher, Stella. He passed through Bologna, which so pleased him by its quiet, its hospitality, and its society, that he wished to remain there permanently; but his contract with Stella obliged him to proceed to Milan. The work which he had undertaken consisted in preparing the plan and writing the introduction to a complete edition of Cicero. This piece of labour, little to his taste, he finished as soon as possible, and set out for Bologna; but not before he had made an agreement with Stella, by which he was to receive ten scudi a month, and all his work to become the property of the publisher. With this miserable pitance, eking out by teaching Latin and Greek to two private pupils, Leopardi contrived to establish himself in Bologna. He was guided by a true instinct in selecting that city as his residence; for there he found two firm friends, Counts Pepoli and Papadopoli (his *divino amico* he calls the latter), and he seems to have enjoyed some measure of happiness in the society of the Contessa Malvezzi. His letters about her show the truest touch of affection which he ever displayed for a living woman.

"The first days of our acquaintance," he writes, "I passed in a sort of delirium and fever. We have never talked of love except in jest; but we live together in a friendship which is at once tender and delicate, with mutual interests and an abandon that is like love without its pain. She has a great esteem for me. In short, this friendship forms and will form a marked epoch in my life; for it

has disillusioned me of my illusion, and has convinced me that there are really pleasures on the earth, which I had thought impossible."

But even this last happiness failed him. Whether he was too exacting and demanded too much esteem, or whether the lady simply grew tired of him, we do not know; but the day came when Leopardi received a note to say that the Malvezzi found his society no longer endurable, and he was thrust back once more into his abysmal despair, from which he emerged with heart estranged, and made bitterer than ever towards women. He found some consolation, however, in his reputation and success as a literary man. The people of Bologna welcomed him with enthusiasm; and he was invited to recite before one of the Bolognese Academies. A bookseller also undertook the first complete edition of his poems, which bears the date of 1826 with a portrait. But his health suffered from his poverty and the cold of that rigorous winter. He was unable to use a fire owing to an inflammation of the bowels; and for weeks he was compelled to lie in bed, or to work in a sack stuffed with feathers. His eyes were somewhat better; but there can be no doubt that the winter months at Bologna did him serious harm, and he had the bitterness of knowing that the one place where he had as yet found some content was barred to him for ever by his health.

In 1826 Leopardi returned home. He was decidedly weaker, and he found Recanati more intolerable than ever. He shut himself up in his own rooms; and, as he says himself, "the first time I shall have been out of doors will be to-morrow, when I get into the carriage to go away." He was at Florence when Stella published the "Operette Morali" in Milan. These dialogues appeared almost contemporaneously with Manzoni's "Promessi Sposi," and immediately secured a high reputation for their author.

They were the cause of Leopardi's first recognition and acceptance by the Italian public at large, and his company was eagerly sought by the Florentine society. But he had not the power to enjoy what might have been to him a delightful moment. Ill-health, his constant and malignant enemy, pursued him here more cruelly than at Bologna. His eyes troubled him so much that he was obliged to sit for days together in a darkened room: indigestion and tooth-ache kept him in perpetual misery. The doctors also began to discover symptoms of consumption. "Certain it is," he cries, "that a dead man spends his day better than I do." He determined to pass the winter at Pisa, and the mild climate of that Maremma city suited his health admirably. His letters are full of the delight and relief which he felt in the gentle airs of a perpetual spring. He speaks with pleasure of the promenade by the Arno, and of a certain favourite walk which he calls the "way of remembrances, where I go when I want to dream with my eyes open." Above all, at Pisa he could see the horizon. But the death of his brother Luigi and his father's persistent letters called him back to Recanati much against his will.

Leopardi's head was now full of designs and forecasts for work: among others with a plan for a dictionary of useless knowledge and of things which no one knows. But his health would not allow him to get beyond the titles. He must often have thought of his own remark, that no man's life is long enough to allow him to complete his own career. Three or four poems are all that belong to the period of his last sojourn in Recanati. He left his home for ever in 1830, and went to Florence by way of Bologna. At Florence he found a warm welcome from his literary friends, whom the false report of his death had quickened into warm expressions of the loss which they believed that Italy had sustained. In 1831 an edition of

his Odes appeared, with a dedication to his Tuscan friends; and he was subsequently elected a member of the Cruscan Academy. But no honours nor recognition could avail him now. This dedication to his Tuscan friends is in reality Leopardi's farewell to literature. He felt that his course was finished: what remained of life could only be a race against death.

"And then," he writes, "when twenty-eight years old I lost everything; and this time, I well believe, for ever. You must know that I was not able to read these very pages; and to correct them, I was compelled to avail myself of other eyes and other hands. I lack the very power to grieve; and the magnitude of my misfortunes, of which I am deeply sensible, forbids indulgence in laments. I have lost all. I am a stock that feels and suffers."

His power of suffering was the last quality to desert him. And he was doomed to experience one last misery: he fell hopelessly in love, and found himself mocked and rejected. In anger and pain he left Florence for Rome, where he hid himself from all his friends, never once quitted his lodgings, and wrote the terrible poem "*Aspasia*," in which, with all the force and fury of wounded feeling, he laid bare what appeared to him the reasons why he never won a woman's love. His devotion was given to the woman of his imagination: not to the real woman before him, whom his senses cheated him to regard as the incarnation of his ideal. And the real woman was not slow to perceive that it was not her but another that he loved. His rage and passion never found a finer rhetorical expression than in this poem, which closes the unhappy chapter of love in Leopardi's life.

Little more remains to be told. When Leopardi returned to Florence, the doctors pronounced against his passing the winter in that windy city. His friend Antonio Ranieri, whose acquaintance he had made in Florence, and who at once attached himself to the unhappy poet with a singular and noble devotion, offered him a home at Naples, and thither the two went in

1833, and there Leopardi lived with Ranieri, "whom nothing but death could part from him," till 1837. The "Pensieri," the "Tramonto della luna," the long satire of the Batrachomyomachia, and that terrible but splendid final word on life, "La Ginestra," were written either in Naples or in Ranieri's country villa at the foot of Vesuvius. Leopardi seems to have been happier and more at peace now than ever he had been before. No doubt ill-health had blunted the edge of his sensibility; and the devotion of his friend, who never left him day or night, must have done much to make the close of life endurable. He felt that he was near to death. In one of his latest letters, addressed to his friend De Sinner, he says: "I feel the intensest desire to embrace you once more; but where or how may that be satisfied? I fear only in the meadows of asphodel."

He died in Naples on the evening of June 14th, 1837. The two friends were at table, and the carriage was waiting at the door to take them to their villa. Leopardi suddenly complained of asthma—it was the dropsy attacking the heart—and asked his friend to fetch a doctor. When Ranieri returned, Leopardi was lying across the bed supported by pillows. He smiled, and Ranieri took him in his arms. Then Leopardi looked up at his friend and said, "I cannot see you any more: open the window: let me see the light."

Settembuni, in his "Ricordanze," tells how Ranieri, with difficulty, rescued his friend's body from the common grave where all the victims of cholera were buried.

"His friend Antonio Ranieri told me what difficulty he had to find a place where he might bestow the remains of this great man. No priest would allow the corpse inside his church. Ranieri spoke to several; but always,

"No!" Some one suggested the priest of San Vitale as a man of wide sleeves and a glutton for fish. Ranieri was off to the fish market; bought mullet and cuttles, and sent a handsome present to the priest, who let himself be persuaded, and gave a lodging to the body in the outer wall, hard by the door of the church. So for few fish, Giacomo Leopardi found a grave."

Ranieri raised a tablet to his memory, carved with the Christian cross and Minerva's owl; while Giordani wrote his epitaph. Among other memorials of his friend, Ranieri has preserved his features in a mask taken after death. The profile is beautiful, with a powerful forehead, and delicate lines about the brow, nose, and lips: the upper lip is extraordinarily sweet, and we may well believe that Leopardi had a lovely smile.

Much of the interest awakened by Leopardi's life and work is due to the vivid exposition of a peculiar temperament. He is the most direct, the most powerful, the most concentrated, but at the same time the most rigidly limited, and least widely human, of all the poets in whom the malady of the age became vocal. His was a "still-born philosophy, incapable of progress and destructive of life; but he possessed the style of an athlete in which to express the conclusions of his sombre genius." These conclusions were wrung from him by his own individual suffering upon which he fixed an immovable regard. They are, in fact, himself; and hence comes the lucidity and force of the man. His singleness of view, and the interpenetration of his philosophy and his style, gifted Leopardi with the power of showing himself, and imposing his mood on others. In him there reigns something of the calm, the monumental force and coldness which belong to forms of ice and snow among the upper Alps.

H. F. BROWN.

## BY A WILTSHIRE STREAM.

CHORLEYFORD MAGNA is in Wiltshire—though it would be as well to state at once, to save possible trouble, that the ordnance maps affect a spelling which will make all search fruitless. Fourteen years ago, when the great autumn manoeuvres of 1872 turned the Wiltshire downs for a space into a mimic battle-ground, Chorleyford (or Chawlvr'd as the local vernacular has it) became temporarily famous. After unnumbered centuries of such oblivion as a remote hamlet of a score or so of dwellings might be expected contentedly to submit to, the village on the Chorley of a sudden blossomed into fame. For a whole week at any rate its name was in all men's mouths, and blazed in big type upon their breakfast-tables. Special correspondents of world-wide note dashed off their despatches upon its inn-tables. Distinguished foreigners, in the uniforms of half Europe, whisked through its streets. Infantry, cavalry, artillery poured down its quiet lanes. For six memorable hours every living thing indigenous to Chorleyford cowered, stunned and stupefied by the roar of cannon and the rattle of musketry; while the smoke of battle, so say the older inhabitants, hid the sun for nearly the whole of that never-to-be-forgotten August day. Yes: fourteen years ago the Battle of Chorleyford was a famous event: the eyes of England rested on the humble hamlet: to-day, when I go down there to fish, friends want to know where in the world it is. Alas, for fame!

At this early date, however, the "manoeuvres" are but things of yesterday, and the thunder of those unshotted guns still echoes in the ears of the natives. The landlady of the "Wheat Sheaf" almost resents the well-intentioned compliment to her ham and

eggs, as she recalls with a triumphant shake of her ringlets the martial heroes who once gathered at her board. The miller's wife, as with hospitable intent she presses on us a jug of that incomparable local liquor known as Kennet Ale, is encouraged in her hospitality by the desire to recall (as she annually recalls) that great day when a German prince in full uniform drained that identical jug to the last drop, "without so much as a 'eavin' of a breath." Even Thomas Staggers, the sexton, whose thoughts would be turned, you might suppose, by the duties of his profession to the future rather than the past, has had for fourteen years only one remark: "Lord, zur, if you'd 'a seen this 'ere place in the manoeuvres you wouldn't 'a know'd it."

To turn, however, towards the stream which, in these piping days of peace, constitutes the chief attraction of Chorleyford, it is neither a large one, nor is it, like some of the Wiltshire streams, famous in the angling world. It becomes, nevertheless, in course of time and with some tributary assistance, a river that everybody either has, or at any rate ought to have, heard of. But by the time this importance, together with a grander name, has been achieved, the pike and the perch have usurped the place of the fat trout that wallow in its infant springs. A few big fellows, it is true, may hold their own in the deep weedy holes; but for the most part the leger and the spoon, the worm and the minnow, take the place of the sedge and March brown which are used by the frequenters of its upper waters.

Here, however, it is called the Chorley brook, and its dimensions are in keeping with the modesty of its name. There was a time when, if my tail-fly should fasten in an unyielding

rush-head on the opposite bank, a jump across in the narrowest spot handy carried with it no sense of insecurity. Nowadays, it is true, prudence on such occasions dictates the more dignified, if longer, route round by the bridge—but let that pass. If the Chorley is small, it is full of trout that will average more in weight than those of the broadest reaches of the Tweed, or the grandest stretches of the Tyne. The brook, moreover, is so clear and still, and withal so shallow, that a Devonian, or a Scotchman, or a Welshman would stand upon its banks in blank despair. His heart would sink within him as he counted the pebbles at the bottom twenty or thirty yards away, and saw the dark streaks of the vanishing trout as they darted for the friendly shelter of the banks.

There are indeed two almost distinct branches of fly-fishers—two classes of votaries who, upon the whole, know very little about one another. They hate each other, I was going to say; but such an attitude would be as untrue. I have no doubt, however, but that the dry-fly fisherman of the slow south-country streams, of those particularly that are tributaries of the Thames or flow into the English Channel east of Southampton water, considers himself the highest exponent of the gentle art. I do not say he looks down upon salmon fishing; but he knows that almost any one can hook a salmon in a boiling pool, while only he and such as he can seduce that wily old three-pound trout who is making from time to time faint circles on the still surface of the transparent stream.

Your dry-fly man is inclined to look upon the great mass of trouters, whose mission is to cast two or three flies upon troubled waters, with something akin to complacent and patronizing compassion. He regards himself as a member of a small and skilful coterie. The area of water over which his special art is practised is limited and narrow compared with the vast

area of rapid waters that in the three kingdoms, and elsewhere, are flogged by the ordinary fisherman. These latter, whom he designates as rough-water fishermen, may, according to him, be admirable performers in their own sphere; but their sphere he considers to be, from an artistic point of view, an infinitely lower one than his own; and to some extent this claim, though at times too forcibly asserted, has some justice in it. Your dry-fly fisherman, as a rule, has no romantic passion for flood and fell, for moss-covered rocks and over-arching woods. I don't accuse him for a moment of being indifferent to scenery; but obstacles of any kind interfere with his work, and he likes a water-meadow for choice, nor does he mind loitering about all day within a compass of the most restricted kind and amid surroundings that your west-countryman would denounce as insufferably tame. The spirit of competition, moreover, is, I think, stronger with the dry-fly fisherman than with the rest of the craft. He very often hails from the metropolis, and spends a good deal of his leisure time in haunts more or less dedicated to prominent professors of the art. He mixes in a set, too, in which the names of certain great performers shine out like stars: names of which the outside world, and even the provincial angling world, know nothing; but which are famous in the inner circle of these choice spirits who devote themselves wholly to the capture of the wiliest and largest of the trout species by the most scientific of methods.

Men of this kind, it is true, may be found far afield, in Scotland or in Norway, salmon-rod in hand, or even condescending to a ten-foot rod and three flies by the banks of a Welsh brook; but of these giants of the rod the home-counties are the special province and domain. At Farningham and Fairford, at Winchester or Hungerford, the best rooms at the inn, and the most obsequious smiles of mine host fall to their share as natur-

ally as do the best fish in the river to their rod. There may be local experts; but the metropolitan element it is that practically rules the roast, and upon club-waters proves the staunchest of supporters.

Yet these chalk-streams of the south breathe little of the angling tradition or angling spirit into the districts through which they steal their noiseless way. They are by their very nature exclusive, sacred often to a chosen few whose very names the rustics on the banks know not, and with whose skill they are utterly unable to sympathise. Among the troutting communities of the north and west the case is very different. In the valleys of the Tweed, for instance, the Tyne, or the Coquet: by the banks of the Torridge or the Exe: in the dales of Yorkshire, or among the hills of Derbyshire and Wales, the spirit of old Izaak pervades the atmosphere. In the squire's gun-room, in the hat-rack at the parsonage, the fly-rod is a regular article of furniture. In humbler dwellings, home-made, but none the less effective, weapons stand behind the door. At the country station, casting-lines and flies adorn the hat of every third male that loiters on the platform to see the train come in. The ploughman in the fields, the hedger on the banks of the noisy brawling stream, though he may neither have the knowledge, time, inclination nor liberty to follow the sport himself, nevertheless takes a keen interest in it, and makes inquiries of you as you pass that proclaim him to be a master at any rate of its details. The miller's daughter has already been elevated by the Laureate to a leading place in riparian romance: the miller's boy is almost as famous a personage in the hands of those literary gentlemen who supply at stated seasons leading-articles upon the gentle craft. He typifies, does the latter, the exasperating urchin who with the crudest of weapons pulls out trout after trout, while the unfortunate cockney upon the opposite bank,

though armed by a London tackle-maker to the teeth, fails to tempt a single troutlet. It is by such streams only that your tyro is humiliated by contact with such local urchins. There are no millers' boys upon chalk-streams. The individuals who pursue that calling upon the banks of southern rivers either confine themselves strictly to their professional duties, or limit the aspirations of their leisure hours to the capture of minnows. The miller's boy, as understood by the journalistic world, has no scope upon the Kennet or the Colne. His make-shift weapons, that beguile quarter-pounders in the brawling Yorkshire brook, would be regarded as far beyond the limits of a joke by the wary two-pounders of such illustrious streams. Besides, there is no room upon chalk-streams for such genii. A Peeblesshire brook may be absolutely free, and yet give admirable sport of its kind to innumerable persons and show no signs of deterioration; but neither the banks nor the surface of your slow south-country river are adapted to indiscriminate trampling or continuous flogging. Upon the former, fishing is distinctly a democratic and popular sport: in the latter the sport is, if not aristocratic, at any rate most exclusive. You must either be the member of a club whose ranks a very indifferent performer would not have the temerity to enter; or you must fish private water under permission of a serious, formal and obligatory kind. If you are a fisherman you will appreciate the difference in obligation between a day on a Wiltshire river and one upon a Devonshire brook. At the same time there is no question as to the vast amount of good troutting, shut up and unutilised, wasted and worse than wasted by the stupid selfishness of many riparian owners. The amount of enjoyment that the owner of a trout-water can give to a great number of people without the faintest sacrifice on his own part is very great. Yet, how often do we see a river packed with fish going to

waste : a day perhaps in the season given to near neighbours and friends, almost grudgingly, as an awful privilege ; whereas, the water itself would be vastly improved by having a couple of rods over it daily throughout the season. Owners who understand fishing are seldom sinners in this respect.

The Chorleyford brook, at this period at any rate of its existence, is quite unknown to fame, but it is full of trout—fine, well-conditioned, clean, bright-coloured fish. There are, it is true, no six-pounders, such as wallow in the mill-tails and under the bridges of its greater neighbour, the Kennet. Two-pounders even are scarce ; but, on the other hand, the majority of the six or seven brace you may expect to take upon a fair day in the May-fly season will be a little over rather than under a pound. There will be, perhaps, two or three of greater weight, while, on the other hand, a few will have to be returned to the water as failing to stand the eleven-inch test which local rules require.

In early May, when the trout are just beginning to come into condition, and when vegetation has scarcely as yet made a start, the bed of the Chorley is almost as clean and clear and transparent as if no water flowed over it at all. When the pollard-willows on the banks are just dressing their shorn heads with green, and the fruit-trees are whitening with blossom in the village gardens, when the rookery behind the church is still almost as dark and sombre as in winter, and the beech avenue that leads to the manor as leafless as if the March winds were still whistling from the downs—in these early days, though thousands of well-conditioned little fish have fallen to the rods of north and west-country fishermen, it is still full early for these heavier and more fastidious trout. Their humour, at all times doubtful, is at this time exceedingly so. It is not merely that the bed of the brook is as bare of covert as a turnpike-road : rising fish might even then with a little extra

care and skill be circumvented, while with a good breeze wet-fly-fishing might be followed with pretty sure success over feeding fish. But fly at this time is apt to be scarce : the trout themselves have not been as yet stirred into activity by the abundance of winged prey which warm sunbeams and soft winds will soon bring them, and are still for the most part looking for their food at the bottom. Now in June and July on the Chorley, if the fish are not rising at one period of the day, they will almost to a certainty be feeding at another ; and the angler has only to call to his aid that inexhaustible stock of patience with which an outside world, somewhat contemptuously it must be feared, credits him. There are far worse places, too, in which to loiter away the warm hours of an idle summer day than the Chorleyford meadows, even should the fish prove persistently unkind. There are, it is true, no crags nor mountain-peaks. There are no waterfalls (except the mill-hatch), no purple heather, no fern-clad ravines. Everything is homely, pastoral, English, let us say, to the core. There are smooth meadows stretching away, now on this side, now on that, pierced by a hundred silver threads of bubbling water that keep them for ever fresh and green. There are tall elms and limes and beeches of unnumbered years, where noisy colonies of rooks, as conservative as the villagers themselves, have made their home. There is, too, abutting close upon the stream, a tiny Norman church, the pride no doubt of generations of vicars and churchwardens ; and a church-yard rests upon the river-bank, where tenderly-supported yew trees of unknown antiquity throw dark shadows over humble tombstones in every stage of preservation, from the white marble of yesterday to the grey and battered stones, the water-worn and weather-beaten slabs of centuries ago.

Chorleyford Magna is not merely an essentially English nook : it is

above all, if the epithet may be allowed, Trollopian—"and therefore commonplace" may perhaps be added. Certainly, and commonplace, if you like—for it is commonplace England that is incomparable. Foreigners don't care a rush about Cader Idris and Helvellyn and Ben Nevis. The world teems with sights that equal these in quality and dwarf them in size. But to the stranger, travelling for the first time from Liverpool or from Dover to the capital, our every-day English landscape appears in a light that those who have practically never left it cannot realise; and draws forth an admiration that can perhaps only be fully understood by such as have known an exile something longer than a vacation-tour.

Whether the commonplace Englishman is such an object of admiration to the intelligent foreigner as commonplace rural England is a matter with which we have no concern. The Barsetshire folk, we fear, were exceedingly commonplace. That, however, does not prevent us from being exceedingly fond of them; and from the down above Chorleyford Magna you can see upon clear days the spire of Barchester Cathedral faintly traced against the sky. For those who revere the memory of Trollope, no more fitting spot could be found in which to drop the tributary tear than the churchyard of Chorleyford Magna. For but a slight effort of the imagination would be required to picture the vicar of Bulhampton, his harrowed feelings relieved by the capture of a brace of trout, striding towards the wicket in the clipped laurel hedge that leads towards the vicarage. From the trim lawn that surrounds that cosy habitation the click of the croquet-balls has, it is true, long ceased to sound. Yet behind those French windows which look out upon the gay flower-beds and the yellow gravelled paths, fancy might even now depict some amiable Dorothea, some moist-eyed Frances, tortured by doubts as to whether she

is right or wrong in refusing the addresses of the athletic young Oxonian who has just been inducted to the living of Chorleyford Parva. There is the manor house, too, hard by, solid, Georgian, and respectable, with its pleasant pasture-lands between the downs and the river where the youth of Chorleyford play cricket in summer evenings. The blinds are down, for land-matters are bad in Wiltshire. If Frank were living there now, his mother and sisters would say with more emphatic decision even than they said long ago in the reign of Dr. Thorne, that "he must marry money."

Far away to the north and to the south stretch the bare bleak downs, for the valley of the Chorley is but a rich narrow strip amid the high chalk-lands which run from the Thames valley southward to the New Forest. Salisbury Plain, indeed, may be said to actually start from the white dusty road that skirts the vicarage garden and leads the traveller over many long and dusty miles to the ancient Wiltshire boroughs of Marlborough and Devizes. To the southward, hundreds of acres of unfenced tillage, of wheat and oats and turnip-land, trend gradually upwards till with a sharp spring the unbroken down throws its rounded outline against the sky-line. Forlorn clumps of firs crown here and there the lonely heights, ragged wind-scarred trees that look as if every gale would be their last. Yet, there they stand against the sky—roaring in the winter winds and moaning in the summer breeze—gaunt and erect as year after year and decade after decade goes by—local landmarks as immutable and characteristic well-nigh as the grey-withers of Avebury and the pillars of Stonehenge.

There, too, rising and falling across the bleak downs towards the metropolis of Trollopia, go the gleaming chalk roads, whose new-laid flints we have so often and so fondly heard in fancy grating beneath the high wheels of Dr. Thorne's gig, as under other

skies far removed from those of Wiltshire we have followed him in his rounds.

George, the keeper, knows nothing, alas, about Dr. Thorne or Archdeacon Grantley ; but the best course to take when the trout are not rising is to go round to the bridge that leads into the wood and paddock sacred to his young pheasants. In any case it is a pleasant place to loiter in, for there is a tall elm and a green bank close by, and some big sluice-gates over which the usually placid Chorley pours its waters, churning and foaming and sparkling as if some mountain hollow and not a Wiltshire meadow had given it birth. In addition to this, George is pretty sure to put in an appearance before long: not, we will suppose for a moment, that the half-crown which he knows he may count on with such absolute certainty is the sole attraction. News, since the squire went to live abroad, has not flowed into Chorleyford with the same regularity as of yore ; so a thirst for knowledge of the great world may perhaps qualify his more sordid motives. For George is of an inquiring mind, though you would not think it to look at him. Something, too, of a politician, and a staunch Tory of course, as becomes his professional calling. Our friend is a typical south-country keeper of the more modest and rustic order. He gives no evidence of considering himself greater or grander than his relatives who hoe the turnips and reap the corn-fields on his beat. He is not, in short, a flunkey in hobnails, and may be considered a fair representative of Chorleyford Magna and studied as such, if you are a student of rural types. Indeed, I should be inclined to say that, in face and figure, he emphasizes the prevailing type of these parts. To a Londoner, he is a joy to look upon. I am sure that a sight of his face would be almost as beneficial to an appreciative inhabitant of Bethnal Green as a day at the seaside. To compare its rotundity to the moon would be unoriginal, but strictly accurate. If George's face, however,

is as round as the orb of night, the fieriest flush that ever illumined the latter at harvest-time would pale beside the roseate hue that perennially mantles on the face of our friend in velveteens. It is not the hue of the omnibus-driver or the cabman, that may owe its richness in part or in whole to the grog-shop. George's bloom smacks of nothing but the north wind and autumn hail-storms on the downs. In the sense that I am thinking of at any rate, a river-side sense, George is a typical south-country keeper. He knows no more about fly-fishing than he does about political economy or the binomial theorem. His mission, so far as the river is concerned, is to see that no audacious and unaccredited angler from above or below invades its waters, and that no villager indulges in proceedings of a kind still more injurious to the trout. George's talents as a sportsman lie elsewhere. In the coverta there is no one who can bring down the pheasants he has raised, if required to do so, with more ruthless certainty than he. A November partridge, rising from the dripping turnips in the teeth of a hail-storm, has a poor chance when that stolid, rubicund, whisker-fringed face lies behind the hammers. Nor is there any one who in the sheltered hollows of the down can mark the tuft from which a hare will jump with anything like such certainty as George. But by the river-side he is a shocking ignoramus. For him the gentle art is a mystery, sealed and closed. In his heart of hearts I am afraid he despises it, for George has trod the banks of the Chorley in a business way ever since—well, by the local reckoning, say since five years before the "manoovers;" yet he is still absolutely impervious to the fact that trout have eyes. If in his zeal for your success he wishes to point you out a rising fish, that same fish will to a certainty be laughing to himself under the bank thirty yards away long before our friend has finished taking stock of him; while, as for handling a landing-net, to this day I

never cast under the beech-tree at the corner below the bridge without a sigh over the noble three-pounder that went sailing off with a foot of gut on the only occasion I was rash enough to entrust it to George's reckless and unaccustomed hands. A greater contrast, indeed, to the light-footed attendant who leaps from rock to rock, abuses your flies, and points out the most likely runs upon a mountain river, can hardly be conceived than George. The latter is in no sense adapted to a stiff country, though where there is plenty of room to put his iron-shod foot down he can go at a steady gait practically for ever. His manner of dress, though eminently suited to his style of beauty, is suggestive of stubbles and turnips, not of rushing torrents and heathy hills. The skirts of the velveteen look equal to the storage of almost any number of rabbits and hares, while the thick wrinkles of his corduroy breeches will, on a hot July day, almost bring sympathetic beads of perspiration to your brow.

To-day there is no friendly wind upon the surface of the Chorley. The rain-fall has been practically *nil*: it is the end of June, too, and the sun is shining with, at any rate, sufficient brightness for the hay-makers in the meadows. From north and west come tales of dried-up streams and disappointed anglers. One thing, however, can be said for these slow souther rivers: their waters are so manipulated for purposes of irrigation that the angler is practically secured against the disappointment of that half-dry bed so familiar to the frequenters of western streams in summer seasons. On your Wiltshire river if the water is low at one point, at another it is, probably, dammed up till it oozes over the top of the spongy banks. This frequent manipulation of the water, however, is at times no doubt a sore disturber of the arrangements of the fish. But on the most famous reaches of famous chalk-rivers, where the angler ranks first and the farmer and the miller are compelled to respect the feelings and

pay regard to the convenience of the local club or corporation: where hatches and sluices have to be handled with some regard to the susceptibilities of the trout, and where again weed-cutting is systematically carried on, and proprietors above and below harmoniously worked with, there is little trouble on this score. But at the Chorley brook there is, of course, no such elaborate machinery. You must take your chance with the miller, who is an autocrat, and thinks nothing of reserving in his mill-dam for a couple of hours most of the water that should be flowing under your fly. In addition to this, you may be thankful if George has been able to spare time from his more serious labours to cut the weeds, that by the middle of summer would otherwise transform the clear surface of the Chorley into a green carpet over which the moorhens and dab-chicks race with impunity. Weeds are at once the blessing and the curse of chalk-streams. The former, when, as now, they are trailing their long streamers a foot beneath the surface, a covert for the fish and a mitigator of the clear transparency of the water. A curse, on the other hand, not only when they are allowed to close the stream and make fishing impossible, but when the cutting is carried on irregularly by numerous small proprietors. When, for instance, Farmer Worzel, who sublets his half-mile of fishing to two gentlemen in London, selects one day to cut his weeds, and Dr. Pestle, who comes in above, selects another, and the vicar, whose glebe entitles him to four hundred yards of water just below, commences operations on a third; and when, moreover, these exasperating operations are effected piece-meal, and the unhappy angler below is liable at any moment to be discomfited, overwhelmed, and driven home by the floating avalanche of vegetation. What chalk-stream fisher does not recall many such a bitter experience? At the long-wished-for period, perhaps, when the basket-strap is beginning to tighten on your

shoulders, and a brace of pound-and-a-half fish after a long blank morning have been landed as a foretaste of good things to come: who does not recall at some such hopeful moment the ominous appearance of bunches of green weed, trifling at first as they tumble over and over at long intervals in the current, but increasing by degrees to great beds of solid tangled verdure, sliding and whirling all over the surface of the stream? You may then put up your rod, ponder over the possibility of there being an earlier train than the one appointed for your return to town, or prepare to face upon foot that five miles of Roman road over which the trap from the "White Hart" was expected at a still remote hour in the mists of evening to come to your assistance.

By June, however, the weeds even in uncared-for rivers have not got to their worst. They are still trailing and streaming below the surface. The chalk and gravel and mud that in spring-time reveals itself so plainly in the river's bed to the angler is now covered with the waving subaqueous crop, thick enough to shelter the heavy trout, but not sufficiently matted to offer them, when once hooked, much assistance in their frantic efforts to escape. It is about this time the May-fly makes its appearance, and the dry-fly fisherman comes out in all his glory. It is not only with the May-fly, but through all the summer season, that the dry-fly is nowadays mainly relied on in these still chalk-streams. It would make a Scotchman stare (if the still transparent water had not already disgusted him) to see a Wiltshire man, or rather let us say a metropolitan angler, creeping up upon a Wiltshire trout. The faint circle far away under yonder tuft of rushes would scarcely have been noticeable to the north-water fisherman; but the practised dry-fly man can see a two-pound trout beneath the surface where the ordinary mortal can descry nothing but the reflection of a blue sky chequered with fleecy clouds. There

is a difference, however, between the fish who is merely visible and the fish that is rising. The former may be bullied into taking: the latter with the exercise of requisite skill and caution may be fairly expected to make advances of some kind. Down on one knee you had better go, as far below the rising fish as you think compatible with the certainty of being able to put the fly above him. If you have a fourteen-foot rod, so much the better. Cast after cast must be made in the air till the sedge or the alder is perfectly dry both in wing and hatch and dubbing: then, as for the twentieth time it is accurately poised above the nose of the expectant trout, let the point of the rod drop and the fly fall lightly upon the water, where with wings cocked and tackle outspread it will float upon the surface, a most irresistible morsel. It may be that your wily trout will resist it once, twice, or half-a-dozen times: it may be at the first presentation your fly will disappear in that glorious swirl of water which is generally all the commotion made by a chalk-stream trout rising with serious intentions. Or some false cast again, or want of proper vigilance, may send our speckled friend with a rush to the shelter of the nearest bank.

Such fishing may seem tame and slow to some. To others it appears the only troutng worth living for. It is fortunate that the tastes of anglers, like those of other mortals, differ: that wherever their paths may lie, whether by the reedy banks and the peaceful scenes of the Kennet and the Itchen, or amidst the foam and roar of Scottish torrents or Canadian rapids, the feeling that urges them on and brings them back again and again with a zest that only ends with the failure of physical powers, is the same; while the angling memories, we may be sure, that are associated with mill-hatch and water-meadow are as sweet and as lasting as those which belong to cataract and mountain-peak.

A. G. BRADLEY.

## THE ROMANCE OF A BOTTLE.

THE house had formerly been inhabited by a painter ; and the studio, which spread its gaunt unshapen length along the southern wall of the neglected garden, had been given over to the old man that he might divert himself in it as he pleased without fear of domestic invasion. Evidently it was a place where the intruding foot of wife or housekeeper was never suffered : a forlorn disordered place : dark, too, for the great window was all smirched and blind with dust, and scraps of paper with queer, cabalistic devices were stuck over the lower panes, and rain showers charged with soot had blurred it till it was now almost opaque. It was a long and lofty room. Here and there the walls were smeared with rude grotesque sketches, which remained to satirise the memory of the late proprietor, as his genius had expressed itself in his idlest or most fantastic moods. The dim corners were spun all across with cobwebs : dark blotches of some long-dried chemical fluid, like old blood-stains, showed upon the bare flooring ; and a little ridge of dust on either side of a smooth path some two and a half feet wide, running the length of the eastern wall, marked the course trodden by the old man when he paced his workshop in thought or meditation. The rest of the floor was covered by a fine layer of dust.

The old man himself was just the kind of old man whom you would have expected to find in such a place. The brown and wrinkled skin was stretched tightly over his forehead and the upper part of his skull, which ascended to a sort of blunted point. A thin irregular fringe, too pale to be called grey, too faded to be white, circled his head on a level with the ears, and gave him so far the air of an aged and withered monk. There was still a certain bold-

ness in the forehead, but the eyebrows that had been full and bushy had become mere ragged and colourless tufts. The mouth retained a little of its native firmness, though the loss of the teeth had deprived it of half of its character ; but what powers of expression and what show of intellect had vanished from the other features seemed to have concentrated themselves chiefly in the eyes, from which there radiated a light of almost unnatural brilliancy. An eagerness, a curiosity, and a painful restlessness glittered in them, and they appeared never to take in the half of what they longed to see.

This old man was an Alchemist : probably the last of the Alchemists.

A long line and a curious is the line of the Alchemists. At the head of it we may place Hermes Trismegistus, the Egyptian, concerning whom so little is known that we need not hesitate to accept the conjecture of his biographer that at a certain period of his life he died. Some would assign priority of date to Zofimus the Panoplite, who said that one could make gold out of lead if one went the right way to work, and who may have been Chancellor of the Exchequer in a government whose pecuniary resources were waning.

The old Alchemist in the studio had tried honestly in his day to make gold out of lead, and out of stones, plants, and heaven knows what other things : he had his Powder of Projection and his metals ; his crucible, his furnace, and a poker of the proper sort, like the other Alchemists ; but he had not made any gold. Ten fruitless years he had spent in the endeavour to produce it by technical and prescribed processes of separation, of maturation, and of transmutation : and then, on a day in bright midwinter,

it flashed upon him with the dazzle and shock of inspiration that the thing which above all things else it behoved him to discover and make perfect for the good of himself and his fellow men was that grand and infallible dissolvent of Paracelsus and Van Helmont, the true and only Elixir, which conferred immortality on mortals.

There could be no doubt that both these eminent persons had discovered it for themselves, since they both said as much in their writings. The trouble was that neither of them had thought fit to transmit the secret to posterity.

Line by line the old man pondered all that had been written by, and on account of, Paracelsus and Van Helmont. He read, besides, the extensive and somewhat nebulous works of Gebir, Morienus, Roger Bacon, Lully, Count Trevisanus, Sendivogius, Basil Valentine, Trendus, Philalethes, and some two hundred and fourteen others. Day by day, amid a shadowy silence that would have oppressed a student less utterly absorbed, the old man read between the yellow covers of those frowsy, ingenuous volumes. Often from dawn to dark, and far on into the night, not a sound would be heard in the chamber save the rustle of the leaves as he turned them over one by one. None visited him, none saw him or had word of him. He sat alone, amid the ghosts of a hundred generations of Alchemists, whom he had summoned from the vasty deep to teach him that secret of life which death had taught to them.

Yet, amid the dusky stillness of that dead chamber, there was a lifeless thing that seemed to watch, now mockingly, and now in sympathy, the lean rapt figure of the Alchemist.

This thing that had no life in it was a bottle. A plain narrow-necked vessel of pale green glass, which spirit-merchants had been once wont to fill with some extravagant liqueur. You cannot surround with the feeblest halo of romance a bottle such as this. It had stood at the elbow of the host on supper-tables. Waiters with nap-

kins on their arms had placed it there at the eleventh hour, and guests who had previously drunk their fill of other liquors had welcomed it as an aid and stimulus to digestion. What irony of circumstance had caused this bottle, when emptied last, to be transported here, to the studio of an aged Alchemist than whom no Nazarite had more rigorously abstained from elevating drink?

Many bottles of various shapes stood about upon the floor, most of which contained some dark and subtle poison scarce known to modern science. The pale green bottle stood alone in the embrasure of a window, and held, dissolved in liquid, one of the deadliest drugs that man has yet chanced upon, in this or any age.

It had been rudely stopped, in the Alchemist's unthinking haste, with a thick plug of writing paper, which, with unintentional and quite unconscious art, his fingers had fashioned into the quaint and grinning likeness of a human face. The expression of this face varied as the sun's light fell upon it or was withdrawn from it. Thus it happened that sometimes when the old man's face was kindled by an instant's gleam of pleasure, as his eye explored some sentence that echoed or confirmed some treasured conceit of his own, the physiognomy of twisted paper which served as a stopper to the bottle responded with a smile of contempt; and again, when disappointment and depression drew down the old man's features to a woeful length, the paper face, in the lesser and softer light of evening, would reflect on him a glance almost of tenderness.

At length the Alchemist put a period to his study of those works so old, so vast, so learned, so yellow, and so badly printed. The more feverish his anxiety as he approached the final chapter, the more sardonic had been the expression of the paper plug. Long before this time the hair on the Alchemist's head had thinned, till now it was scanty as wisdom on the lips of an unpaid magistrate. But

when he turned the last leaf and read the closing word, he knew that he had mastered and made his own the hitherto inviolable secret of the Elixir of Life.

Quick upon the stroke of this immense discovery came a warning from within that his own days were numbered. Was he then to die before he could prepare his Elixir of Life?

His spirit was not dashed, for very curiously his desire of life ceased with his conviction that there was a means of cheating death. What he longed for now, was time wherein to perfect his knowledge, that happier men might profit by it. So he toiled afresh, that he might win his secret to the use of posterity.

It was spring, and the daylight lengthened. Sunshine and budding hedges comforted the world, and nature herself seemed willing to assist the drooping Alchemist. But one night he was seized with sudden faintness, and sank half dead from lack of sustenance, whilst the experiment was in the middle stage. A month later, he had a similar, but sharper and more exhausting seizure; and then he began to know that he should not live to make good the secret of the Elixir.

Day followed day: the sun grew warmer, and the blood in the Alchemist's veins grew colder. One morning, the paper stopper of the bottle, contracting in the sun's rays, fell out on to the dust of the floor. In the genial warmth the liquid elements within were slowly evaporated; and the drug crystallised in minute and almost colourless prisms on the sides and bottom of the bottle.

Not all the softness of spring, and her breath that made the buds unfold, could arouse again the fading fires in the withered body of the Alchemist. Life was passing quickly from him who had been the only living thing in the now deserted studio. He crawled no step back upon the road to health, and before the summer was established he died.

Feet that had not entered there

before now trampled the dust of the studio. All was confusion, uglier a great deal than the careless disarray amid which the student had fondly worked. Auctioneers' clerks came and made their inventory of the deadman's poor belongings. They attached stout labels to articles of furniture which one smart rap of the salesman's hammer would have shivered into fragments. The only objects left untouched were a heap of old bottles in a corner beneath the window, on which the dust of years had formed a coarse and solid crust: these, and the solitary bottle in the window. They were not worth a place in the catalogue, nor a label.

The morning after the sale a fat untidy cleaning-woman strode into the room, followed, at a distance which indicated fear if not respect, by her husband, a retired, or superannuated costermonger. The great red eye of the cleaning-woman ranged the area of the studio, and noting such perquisites as the remover had left her, she indicated them to her husband, who collected and stowed them in his basket. In the course of time the whole of this collection reached the sorting yard of a rag, bone, and bottle merchant. Here the articles were sorted according to their kind, and presently an even row of black bottles, and another row of sea-green bottles, showed in what manner order might be evolved out of chaos.

The bottles arrived eventually at the bottle-cleaning yard of a well-known spirit-merchant, where they received a plentiful ablution of warm water, within and without. This spirit-merchant was a person of great talent in his calling, who by judicious blending and treatment could produce a port of recognised standing and condition, effective for use upon a given night.

The bottles passed from the hands of the washer, having undergone as effectual a cleaning as the skill of that functionary could compass. Outwardly they were now all alike. The eye of a connoisseur, equally with the eye of a

superficial observer, would have failed to distinguish the most insignificant difference between them. I shall, however, select one of these bottles, and that not at random, nor without design, and shall give it henceforth a place of its own in this story. It was a pale green bottle of ordinary size and shape; it had passed through many hands, and had been preserved unbroken amid scenes of great diversity, since last it stood in the spirit merchant's yard. It was, in short, the bottle which had stood in the window of the old Alchemist's studio. The ablutionary rites to which it had been subjected had not dissolved the minute colourless particles into which its deadly contents had crystallized under the sun's warmth. They still clung to the sides and bottom of the bottle, as potent as before of swift and horrible destruction. Spirit would have dissolved them in a few seconds: water touched them not.

This bottle, then, was carried presently with its companions to an upper room in the spirit-merchant's establishment, where the air was weighted with the odour of rich liquors, and processes beautiful in their delicacy and mystery were performed by talented and respectable persons during the hours from nine to six. Here, when all was prepared, The Bottle received an exceedingly choice blend of old liqueur brandy. It was then corked, sealed, labelled, and properly bestowed in another department of the house. It remained there during some weeks, when it was once more removed, in the company of eleven others, to the well-chosen cellar of Mr. Theodore, the wealthy and distinguished amateur. They came under the affectionate care of Mr. Dimmick, the butler. "These bottles arrive most opportunely," said Mr. Dimmick to himself as he unpacked them. And so in fact they did, for Mr. Theodore was giving, at the end of the week, one of the graceful suppers he so much affected to the members of a liberal profession. Twenty actors,

the most renowned in London, would appear at his board at midnight on the following Saturday, for the invitations had been accepted to a man.

Preceded by his pantryman, who carried the case upon his shoulders, Mr. Dimmick descended the steps of the cellar, counting each step aloud in his progress, as his habit was. One by one, in an ample bed of sawdust on a vacant shelf, the careful-minded butler placed the bottles. The Bottle was laid the last but one in the upper layer, at the end nearest to the right hand of a person entering the cellar. Mr. Dimmick then surveyed his arrangement of the bottles, and, seeing that it was good, he withdrew.

The day of the supper arrived, and at eleven in the evening Mr. Theodore issued from his club, called a cab, and was driven to his residence, a costly and comfortable house in one of the most agreeable quarters of the town. He went at once to the dining-room, where he passed a few minutes in critical study of the table and sideboard. One or two of his rarer vintages, destined for an advanced and marvellous stage of the feast, were displayed upon the latter; but Mr. Theodore remarked with surprise the absence of a particular bottle, toward which his fancy had affectionately projected itself during his drive from the club. He summoned his butler, and in terms of lenient reproof discovered to him the deficiency. Mr. Dimmick apologised, could not imagine how he had contrived to be so neglectful, and, retiring in confusion, sank gravely into the fragrant shades of the cellar. Going to the shelf where he had deposited the contents of the newly arrived case of liqueur-brandy, he took the first bottle in the upper layer. Holding it in the wary manner of one who understands how fine liquor should be carried, he was about to commence his ascent, when he reflected that one bottle would but just make the round of the table. "A glass apiece; and such a very fine liqueur! They will want another,"

said Mr. Dimmick. He went back to the shelf and took another, which was The Bottle. With the two bottles under his arm he returned to the dining-room, and the master commended the thoughtfulness of his servant.

It wanted ten minutes of midnight as Mr. Theodore crossed the spacious hall which separated the dining-room from the drawing-room. In front of a noble Venetian mirror, framed in chased and burnished silver, he gave the final set to his tie, and smoothed away from the neighbourhood of his waistband the solitary wrinkle which fretted the fair surface of his satin waistcoat. Standing there he beheld with smooth and kindly gaze a form which was neither youthful nor too mature, but which combined with the admirable elegance of twenty the cultured and slightly more philosophic repose of forty-eight.

Mr. Theodore was a man who spent the fortune which his fathers had made for him upon principles which aimed at securing his own contentment in the first place, and, in the second, the approval of that section of society which pleased him best. A marked tendency to selfishness, plainly indicated by the shape of the nose as seen in profile, was partially corrected by the genial and humour-loving curves of the mouth. Mr. Theodore spoke in somewhat florid though nicely balanced tones, which he could shift with admirable art so as to harmonise them with those of the person to whom he addressed himself. He turned from the contemplation of his person on hearing the arrival of his first guest.

At a quarter after midnight supper was served. It was a rare meal. The host had been a traveller in many lands, and was a happy and versatile story-teller. He told tales, which his talent for mimicry sharpened to the point of wit, of the theatres of the East: of sitting cross-legged in the rushes on the floor of the play-house of Japan: of taking surreptitious lessons in the Nautch

from the favourite dancer of a Mahārājah: he sang a comic song from an Indian farce which was very like an Indian dirge; and subsequently performed the all but incredible feat of condensing into half a dozen sentences the plot of a Chinese tragedy which had occupied a month in representation.

In jest and anecdote the guests matched their host feately. Think of the genius and talent of the London stage concentrated round a supper-table, each man of them an actor who stood in the eye of the public, the star of his particular theatre, a trained humorist, a theatric Mesmer able at will to dissolve in tears or freeze with horror an entire audience, a great declaimer,—or at poorest a magnificent Apollo for whom countless ladies nightly sighed themselves to sleep. Fired by good wine, and the desire to please, each guest poured forth his best, and the host by exhortation and example incited his friends to fresh endeavour. In this blithe way they lengthened out the hours, and the great gilt clock in the hall chimed half-past two. "Dimmick," said Mr. Theodore to his butler, "you may go to bed." Mr. Dimmick gratefully made his bow and retired.

He had scarcely closed the door upon himself when Mr. Theodore noticed that the liqueurs had not been served. He mentioned the circumstance to his guests, with an apology, and added: "By your leave, gentlemen, I'll serve the liqueur myself." He rose, and crossed to the sideboard where, amid a noble array of glasses and flagons of all sizes and shapes, stood the two bottles containing the new liqueur-brandy.

"I should rather like your judgment on a liqueur-brandy I have here, gentlemen," said Mr. Theodore. "I have not yet tasted it myself, but it comes to me with a high recommendation." He took up one of the bottles as he spoke, and was already drawing the cork. That done, he touched the mouth of the bottle with a clean napkin, and

then made the round of the table, filling each glass as he passed. Coming to his own place at the top, he poured out with a flourish the half-glass which was all that remained of the pale golden fluid.

"Now, gentlemen! Before I fulfil my promise, your judgments all, if you please," exclaimed Mr. Theodore, lifting his own glass in challenge to his guests. Every one at the table raised and drank off his glass. Mr. Theodore alone paused for a moment, to note the first expression on the faces of his friends.

What horrid sound was that? A crash of fallen glass, followed by groans and the cries of men in agony. Mute and stiff with horror, the host clutched with both hands at the table, and stared before and around him.

In the first stage of fear a man's strength is often trebled: in the last stage, when fear is no longer fear, but has merged in sheer resistless terror, the muscles become as jelly, and the body sinks an inert mass to the ground. By desperate exertion of will the master of the house saved himself from this state of utter helplessness, but more he could not do. His tongue was riven against his palate: he stood speechless and stared out of eyes grown almost vacant! What was it that he glared at?

Was it death, or but a vision of death? The jest was scarcely dry on these men's lips: did they counterfeit dissolution as a better jest than all? No! Death had them all in his grip: they were dying in most cruel torment! One by one, as his convulsive struggles ceased, each guest fell down, athwart, alongside, or beneath the table; and still the miserable host stood there, rigid and grey with fright, and watched the ghastly play.

His brain was melting: his head grew like to burst: madness would have seized him next. He wrenched himself together, and staggered towards the door. The bell-rope was close against it: he caught at it, and a fearful peal echoed through the house.

A few moments elapsed, in which it seemed to the wretched creature that all eternity was exhausted; and then there was a noise of feet pattering quickly along an upper corridor, down the stairs, and across the hall. He, meanwhile, had scratched a line in pencil on the back of a visiting card, and this he thrust into the hands of the first servant who approached him. "Take it, and run," he said hoarsely: "Dr. F—— [naming the first physician in the town]. "Go as if the devil himself were at your heels. And you, this," he said to another, to whom he gave a card for his own physician, who lived hard by. "The rest to bed again!" He had now regained some nerve, but stood ashen white on the threshold of the dining-room, barring all entrance there.

Through the silent streets, whitening with the dawn, two carriages were presently driving at full speed in one direction. The master of the house went out to meet the doctors, and led them to the room of death. But it was too late. The play was played out. Each of those merry guests had been a dead man for half an hour. At noon the tragedy was known throughout the city. It was Sunday, and when the church bells rang for evening service it was like the tolling for a national funeral.

Here Mr. Theodore finished his story, and his guests, one and all, looked askance at the glasses they had just emptied.

"But is it true?" asked one at length.

"Absolutely," replied Mr. Theodore. "The affair occurred at just such a happy midnight symposium as this of ours. There was poison in the last bottle opened, and it slew the whole company in the horrible manner I have described to you. The host alone, by a strange freak of fortune, escaped the death."

There was another pause, for the guests had not quite recovered their ease. Then Mr. Theodore said: "But

this liqueur-brandy—what do you think of it?"

"Excellent!" chimed the guests in chorus.

"Come, then," continued Mr. Theodore, "there is still another bottle: shall we open it?"

But the tragic tale had left an impression on the mental palates of the guests, and they declined with thanks.

Half an hour later Mr. Theodore shook hands with the last of them, and went to bed by daylight.

And here the story ends, but it has a postscript. For the truth is, that the tragedy which Mr. Theodore told to his guests that evening was within a line's breadth of being repeated at his own supper-table. Had he but opened The Bottle instead of its companion! Or again, had he prevailed on the players to let him fill their glasses again!

But, it will be said, The Bottle remained on the sideboard after Mr. Theodore had gone to bed by daylight. So it did, and was found there by Mr. Dimmick when he entered the room at midday. Now one butler more or less matters little in the march of ages; and if Mr. Dimmick had had his own way there would have been a butler the less in South Kensington on the Sunday afternoon which witnessed the close of this curious affair. For Mr. Dimmick took up The Bottle with intent to bear it to his pantry, and there to satisfy himself touching the quality of this boasted brandy. But here once more propitious fate intervened. In going down stairs the butler's foot slipped on the last step: The Bottle was jerked from his grasp, and smashed into a hundred pieces.

## THE ORIGIN AND INTERPRETATION OF MYTHS.

MYTHOLOGY has, in some form or other, in all ages and in all parts of the world, cast a peculiar spell upon mankind. Those who have framed it, and those who have sought to unravel its mysteries, have alike fallen beneath the influence of this spell. In no study are the dangers greater of being led astray by the personal equation or by modern thought. The former tempts an inquirer to solve a myth by a pet theory, or a pedantic enthusiasm: the latter, to ascribe to a primitive myth-maker a frame of mind peculiar to the nineteenth century.

A simple analogy will best explain our own view of the myth. The lispings of Mythology may be compared to the utterances of a linguist, imperfectly acquainted with several languages, who has acquired a knack, most perplexing to his friends, of combining in his ordinary speech idioms and phrases drawn almost indiscriminately from these several sources. Her gift of tongues sadly needs supplementing by the interpretation of tongues. For example, she speaks, and speaks fluently because unconsciously, the language of Poetry. With less distinctness, she speaks the language of History, but mixes with her facts so many foreign elements drawn from the language of Poetry, that her attainments in this department are rated very low, when tested by the stern canons of the modern historical sense. In the language of Natural Science, she speaks what she knows and feels of the wonders of earth, sea, and sky, though here again the beauty of expression has often to make amends for the lack of grammatical accuracy. In the language of Moral Philosophy she is more successful, although she would scarcely have dignified the language by such a title. Her moralising consists of no metaphysical specu-

lations, there are no hard words or logical puzzles in it. She gives us her convictions in a far more attractive way, dresses them up in a concrete and personal garb, tricks them out in the most effective drapery from her wardrobe—in short, she personifies them. Hers is the truth "embodied in a tale," which has thus found entrance not only "at lowly doors," but in all hearts moulded to receive truth. Lastly, she speaks with much force the language of Religion, giving utterance, though often in figures hard to interpret, to her higher aspirations and her consciousness of higher existences than her own, which seemed now to smile and now to frown upon her, as she interpreted to herself the good and the evil of the world within and without. But sometimes this language of Religion, whose strength lay in its freshness and its flexibility, would become stereotyped into a narrow and a not always noble Theology, when she brought her gods down to earth, and clothed them in the tattered garb of human frailty. There are, then, at least six languages with which this polyglot Mythology is acquainted, to which a recent group of scholars has added a seventh, the language of Folklore, which indeed they maintain to have been her favourite tongue. More will be said on this hereafter. It is now time to examine with some detail the chief attempts which have been made to elucidate this very complex subject. It is hoped that evidence will be forthcoming to fill in the rough outline sketched above.

Professor Max Müller is the leading exponent of the Linguistic method of interpretation. His method is based upon an analysis of language. He holds that by a scientific comparison of the several languages constituting the Aryan family of speech the tongue of the

Sphinx Mythology has at length been loosed. Comparing the literature of the Indian branch with that of the Hellenic and other Western Aryans, he concludes that the Greeks, Celts and Scandinavians did not develop their several systems of Mythology so independently as they themselves supposed, but that they and the Hindoos alike drew from a common source. Granting this, the next question is, what this source was, for, once knowing this, we ought to have found a key to all the Mythologies. Philology, acting upon the Vedas, is made to answer the question. In these earliest of religious documents, the very same words are found to represent in some passages the more striking phenomena of Nature—sky, clouds, fire, &c.—simply as phenomena, and in others to have assumed a semi-personal, or even personal character, and, further, to have been recognised as objects of worship. Here then, says Professor Max Müller, we see the deities in the process of manufacture. The metamorphosis is going on in these old Indian hymns under our very eyes.

Thus, philosophically stated, his position is that the material cause of the myth is the phenomena of heaven : the efficient cause is language and words acting (as will be seen below) in a very remarkable manner ; while the myth in full bloom constitutes at once the formal and the final causes. We shall recur again to Professor Max Müller and his school. It was necessary to advert to his theory, before setting forth the theory of the Folklore school, in order that the latter might be better understood by contrast. Words and language, it has been seen, form the keystone of Professor Max Müller's position.

Those who would make Folklore, that is to say, a study of early custom and practice, the basis of a scientific investigation of Mythology have recently found a clever and persuasive spokesman in the person of Mr. Andrew Lang.<sup>1</sup> His main object is to trace

back the great body of Classical Mythology to an earlier source than the primitive Aryan home. He takes a delicious pleasure in informing the votaries of Hellenic literature that the objects which they have been ignorantly worshipping are but savage customs and hideous superstitions in disguise. His attack on the Linguistic school is vigorous and irresistible. They cannot agree among themselves. One linguist finds the clue to a certain myth in the dawn, another to the same myth in a cloud, a third to the same myth in the sun. They cannot all be right. And even if they could agree in their analysis of words, yet how unsafe to argue from mere names to facts ! Helen's name may be connected with the dawn or the sunset, but it does not follow that the story of the Trojan war is a solar myth. Violet colour may, by much pressure, be extracted from Jason, and Medea may, if she like, trace her daughterhood to the Sun ; but the story of Medea and Jason need not therefore be a solar myth, signifying the blending of the sun's rays with the violet tints of morning. And how do these word-worshippers explain the similarity, nay often the identity, of stories which have clearly grown independently at extreme ends of the world, when the names are entirely different ? Mr. Lang's answer, from his aspect of myths, is quite easy. The stories originated vaguely and anonymously, and special colouring and special names were afterwards added according to the taste of each people.

Mr. Lang would classify early myths somewhat as follows. (1) Tales which had no ulterior aim but to entertain, simply appealing to the instinctive craving for fiction. (2) Tales which grew up around some half-developed savage custom, the myth being deliberately framed to sanction and enforce a new enactment regarding it. The beautiful story of Cupid and Psyche, familiar to us in its Hellenic garb, is thus rather brutally traced to a fantastic formality observed by a newly-

<sup>1</sup> "Custom and Myth." London, 1884.

married pair of savages. (3) Tales describing, generally by human analogies, the impressions made upon the primitive mind by the works of Nature. This class we have seen to be the stronghold of the Philological school. Mr. Lang appears to us to have assigned to this group its proper limits, duly checking the extravagant growth which Professor Max Müller would encourage. It is to be noted that the three aforesaid types of myths, arising from love of fiction, early custom, or observation of Nature, are alike capable of springing up independently and spontaneously among all families of mankind. Hence we shall naturally expect similar myths of each type to arise in different places. Given mankind covering the face of the earth, placed under similar physical and social conditions, they as naturally tend to frame independently similar myths, as similar weapons of war, or similar forms of government. There need be nothing disappointing to us in contemplating this monotony of bias. The Professor in "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," on discovering that he had repeated the same witticism to the same person in the same circumstances after some lapse of time, found solace and, at last, satisfaction in the reflection that only a perfectly balanced mind could so exactly reproduce itself. Similarly the uniformity of early myths may bring home to us the essential unity of men, the oneness of their origin, of their experiences, of their hopes and of their fears. (4) On the other hand, there is one more type of myths, which, after scrutinising their contents, we feel assured could not have sprung up independently and simultaneously in different parts. The story, for example, of Medea and Jason is found with diversity of detail, but unity of substance in languages so unrelated as Zulu, Gaelic, Norse, Russian and Japanese, as well as, of course, in Greek and Latin. Such stories may, according to Mr. Lang, have been diffused by slow filtration from race to

race, there being no sufficient motive which we can discover for a common growth in such cases.

It should here be mentioned that there are not wanting weighty authorities (Professor Sayce, for example,) who are inclined to deny that there is the genuine ring of a myth about such stories as have been classed above. More will be said on this point elsewhere, but Professor Sayce himself admits that the boundary line is almost impossible to draw, that a great part of Folklore at any rate does constitute Mythology, and that the whole question of their relations is at present before the court. We may therefore at least claim them provisionally.

Mr. Lang and his school certainly deserve credit for having broadened the base of Mythology, which was before sadly cramped by the Philological champions. We gratefully accept his contribution, but are disinclined to devote it entirely to the use which he requests. We will procure with it "a convenient site for building purposes," but we will not build the houses with it. To speak without metaphor, we hold that the types which he has illustrated constitute elements in the myth, but lack its more essential properties. Man's higher faculties, glimpses and aspirations have found no expression in the examples adduced by Mr. Lang, for the simple reason, we would suggest, that man himself was barely furnished with such qualities at the very early period to which we propose to restrict the class of myths brought forward by him. It is certain that all myths were not the products of a barbarous age; and it is almost as certain, by the mere internal evidence of the greater number of them, that the framer was at least as great as the myth which he framed.

Now, although early Religion is not co-extensive in scope with early Mythology (a common but erroneous view) yet the two are closely related. Indeed opposing theories of the origin of the myth are tacitly based on opposing

theories of the origin of religion. A brief survey of these theories is therefore essential to our inquiry.

Anthropologists tell us that early Religion and early Mythology consist respectively of a tissue of many threads. Sabæism (a kind of star-worship), adoration of the dead, and mythopœic fancy, all have their share in the fabric. Dreams, visions, magic, are also potent factors in the life of savage tribes. Then there is the worship of plants and animals, originating, according to some, in a confused condition of thought, which led men to believe that their own lives were influenced by, if not derived from these objects. Hence the tales (scarcely worthy of the name of myth) tracing the ancestry of a family to a particular animal, star, or plant. These latter became the badge, the family-arms of the tribe, and are called totems, and the system Totemism. Thus Totemism was, in this view, an element both in early Religion and Mythology. Further factors in the product of the religious sense, according to this school, are such trivial objects, as magical stones, feathers, shells and unsightly stocks and blocks of wood and stone. These were venerated, and are called fetiches and the practice Fetichism. Adding now to Sabæism, ghost-worship, pure fancy, Totemism and Fetichism, above enumerated, the slow action of thought, conjectural inferences, guesses of crude metaphysics and inspirations of isolated men of genius, there slowly emerged that portion of man's nature which realises the Divine. Religion thus sprang from a combined sense of power, terror and wonder.

On the other hand, Professor Max Müller finds the source of Religion in a sense of what he terms the Infinite; and consistently with this view he traces, as we have seen, a large portion of mythical growth to this primary root. Holding practically a theory of innate Religion, he attributes to early man a faculty of apprehending the Infinite—tangible, semi-tangible, and finally intangible objects suc-

sively maturing this capacity. The rush of a torrent, the roar of a wind-swept forest, the grandeur of a mountain awakened at first a vague feeling of awe, which in course of time deepened into a sense of a personal presence—in fact of Deity. Fetichism, and all such practices, are in this aspect, corruptions of a primitive and purer form of worship.

The material and the ideal theories as to the source of Religion, and consequently of Mythology, are thus seen to be widely divergent. The phrase religious myths is, therefore, an ambiguous phrase, which is best avoided. The two schools will entirely differ in their interpretation and classification of such. On the one hand, Mr. Herbert Spencer and his followers maintain that the religious sense was primarily of the earth, earthy, purely human in its inception, and originating in man's desire to propitiate the "double" of his deceased ancestor. Religious myths would thus with him, essentially include all early rites and customs. Professor Max Müller, on the other hand, holds that the religious sense was primarily of the heaven, heavenly, arising from the impressions made upon man by celestial phenomena. Religious myths would thus with him exclude all but these. The fallacy consists in employing a word, which even in our days is sufficiently vague in sense, as though it had a stereotyped meaning when applied to primitive times. As we have attempted to show at the outset, one of the essential features in mythopœic man must have been an inability to distinguish clearly between the several elements in himself, between self and Nature, and between the natural and the spiritual. Something more has still to be said on the complex problem of the origin of man as affecting mythology. For the present, let us conclude an armistice between Mr. Spencer and Professor Max Müller, and a perfectly fair one. Let us persuade them that they differ not in facts but in dates: that the folklore

myths belong to a barbarous and primitive era, whereas the phenomenal myths belong to a cultured period, are long posterior in time and order of growth to the former, and are a product of the literary age of the most intellectual branch of the Aryan family.

Our own position, supported by the anthropologists, is, as has more than once been stated, that the myth is the reflecting mirror of the complex experiences of primitive man. The Solar Theorists, on the contrary, who must now be heard, limit the myth both in its source and its action to the sphere of natural phenomena. Professor Max Müller is a moderate upholder of this view, but must not be held responsible for the extravagances of certain of his followers. And this is how they say it came about. The sun, in his daily path across the heaven, presents manifold aspects to an observer. Each aspect suggested to the primitive mind some human analogy, and gave birth to a separate myth. Now he seemed to start up in the east, as a victor after a struggle with the night: now to be tearing himself from the embraces of his mother (or bride), the dawn: now, as he swept the clouds before him, to be scattering his foes, or, as he was overcast by them, to be hard pressed. This was the first stage. Natural agencies were, indeed, gifted with human attributes, but were still conceived of as physical phenomena. And now—this is the first of the solar theory—a change begins. Strange oblivion suddenly takes possession of all mankind. The waters of Lethe sweep over the earlier myths, wash from them all traces of their physical origin, and cast them up on the shores of a later generation as real descriptions of real men and women. Henceforward, to the close of the mythopoetic era, they retain this character, although often enlarged, identified or combined with later history, or called in to sanction the code of a lawgiver or the system of a philosopher. A single illustration of the solar theory will

suffice—the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. By considerable effort, Orpheus has been etymologically identified with the sun, and Eurydice with the light, dawn or sunset, as usual. This purely physical association was soon forgotten, and the story taken as a literal one. We see the lovely twilight die out before the coming night; but when they saw this, they said that the beautiful Eurydice had been stung by the serpent of darkness, and that Orpheus had gone to fetch her back from the land of the dead. We see the light which had vanished in the west re-appear in the east; but they said that Eurydice was now returning to the earth; and, as the tender light is seen no more, when the sun himself is risen, they said that Orpheus had turned round too soon to look at her, and so was parted from the wife he loved so dearly.

The defects of the solar school appear to be many and glaring. (1) It is assumed that the heavenly bodies were the one thought of primitive man. It would seem that he gazed so intently upon the sun as to have become dazed, and to have seen suns everywhere. (2) It makes too great a demand upon the resources even of the sun. That single luminary puts Proteus literally in the shade, such is the variety of forms he is supposed to have presented to the savage mind. We might almost imagine two primeval myth-makers conversing as Hamlet and Polonius conversed about the famous cloud. (3) It lays too much stress upon the influence of language. We call words to our aid, and no doubt they react in some measure upon us. But we are not at their mercy. They are still our slaves, though they may sometimes grow refractory. (4) Far the gravest defect, however, is the exclusion of the human element from myths. The glory of the mid-day heat, the freshness of the dawn, the calm of twilight—all this can never make amends for the absence of man, born, acting, suffering, dying. The

grandeur of Nature can at no period supplant the pathos of Humanity.

Our own aspect of the theory of the solar myth is as follows:—we admit the solar origin of a portion of the mass of Mythology, if the contents of the myth in question, together with the names, clearly point in that direction, but we strenuously resist the illogical method adopted by Sir G. W. Cox, in his "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," who, while admitting that the myths lost at a very early date, and before accretions had formed round them, their solar and physical associations, yet attempts to indicate the solar bearings of each myth in its later form, forcing his solarities into every type of myth, physical, historical, and moral, and wresting to his purpose even the great epic poems of matured nations. With regard to these latter, Mr. Gladstone has stated the only common-sense view: "Any attempt to expound the Olympian Mythology of Homer by simple reference to a solar theory, or even to Nature-worship in a larger sense, is simply a plea for a verdict against the evidence."<sup>1</sup>

The early savage has, it will have been noticed, been turned to account by materialists, idealists, and solarists alike. He seems to us to have been mutilated more recklessly by his modern friends than he could ever have been by his primitive foes. Professor Max Müller has subjected him to such a searching analysis as almost to deny that he ever existed; and then again, relenting somewhat, grants him indeed his life, but pronounces a curse upon him. Speech and language, which should have been for his good, are to be turned for him into an occasion of falling. Following, or rather outrunning the Professor, Sir G. Cox converts him into a mere unthinking barometer, fashioned to register the impressions of the heavens, but inferior to that instrument because it registers them falsely. Then Mr.

Herbert Spencer brings him down to earth again, but only to re-involve him more helplessly in the strife of tongues, and to add a further curse—that he shall never forget the ghost of his deceased ancestor. It is much to be regretted that this interesting relic cannot revive once again, and "wound the hairy scalp" of these his refined torturers.

It is refreshing to turn from the narrow views of the solar school to the larger vision of Professor Sayce. Each appeals to language, but the latter has not allowed his unrivalled erudition in this department to unhinge his judgment. After specifying several concurrent causes of the growth of a myth (change, for instance, or confusion of meaning which words undergo), attempts to assign a meaning to a word which has become unintelligible, and especially the childish confusion between nature and self, and the unavoidable necessity of expressing abstract ideas by words denoting objects of sense), he defines a myth as a faded metaphor. It embodies "the fossilised knowledge and ideas of a previous age, forgotten and misinterpreted by successors." Rather more hesitatingly he states that it must have a religious colouring, and must be an object of faith. On this ground, and also on the ground of its freedom from artificiality, he would sever it from folklore, fable, allegory and such like. The Professor himself may be quoted to refute his own objections, for many types of myth which he instances, are devoid of the religious element, even if so ambiguous a term may fairly be used, and are clearly the outcome of deliberate art. Nevertheless, Professor Sayce seems to us to have got as near to a definition as is possible. We also gratefully welcome his large avowal that myths enshrine philosophical, religious, geographical and historical truth. This is entirely at one with our original surmise. But when he proceeds to state that the study of words is the only unerring clue to the meaning of any particular

<sup>1</sup> Nineteenth Century Magazine: November, 1885.

myth, he appears to be on less safe ground. Surely well-established analogies between myths found in different parts of the world can leave us a residuum of certainty of meaning at least as solid as that afforded by the analysis of words, which are delicate, isolated, changeful, shading off at one era from reality to metaphor, and at another back again, and (a most important point) not stereotyped (that is, committed to writing), in many cases, until ages long subsequent to the truths which they set forth.

It is possible to recognise such a substratum of historical truth underlying the myths, without proceeding to the lengths of Euemerus, the Greek traveller who three centuries before the Christian era identified the gods of Greece with departed kings, heroes, and philosophers, and, stripping every myth of its supernatural accretion, declared the residuum to be history pure and simple. Nor need we follow the scholars and theologians of the seventeenth century, who, in their endeavours to confirm the historical reality of certain characters of the Old Testament, identified Saturn with Noah, and maintained that the single character of Moses had suggested the several classical personalities of Vulcan, Apollo, Pan, and Priapus.

Mr. Gladstone is one of the few surviving champions of a modified form of this theory. In his "Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age" he attempted to show that the Homeric poems are largely infused with elements derived either from Jewish Scriptures or Jewish tradition. The chief of these are the ideas of a God, of a Redeemer, and of the Evil One, while in a "trine invocation" to Zeus, Athene, and Apollo, he discerns a blurred reflection of the Three Persons of the Trinity. These views are substantially repeated in the "Juventus Mundi," or, rather, repeated with greater confidence. Mr. Gladstone affirms that Oriental research has, during the decade that intervened between the publication of his two works, thrown

further light on his theory that the Phoenicians formed the means of communication between the Jews and the Greeks; and further, that the strong anthropomorphic element in the Hebrew and the Hellenic theologies proves these resemblances to have been the result of intercourse well within historic times, and not of intercourse anterior to the severance of the Semite and the Aryan stock. This we take leave to doubt, and to advance the following theory as a safer hypothesis.

The asserted resemblances between facts or characters in sacred and profane history have to be explained by the light of recent research. The identification of Hebrew with Greek personalities, first discovered in the seventeenth century, was founded upon the belief in an original revelation made to all living men, as recorded in the first ten chapters of the book of Genesis. On the dispersion, related in the eleventh chapter, the forefathers of the Greeks of history carried away to their peninsula (as did the other branches of the human race) the substance of the religious teaching of the earlier chapters of Genesis, which, however, soon became corrupt, and degenerated into polytheism. There is nothing unreasonable or inconsistent with modern discovery in all this. Incomprehensible to our finite minds as all modes of a primary revelation must ever remain, yet the fact of some original manifestation of God to man,—when the creature became dimly conscious of the Creator, and certain moral relations naturally followed—this fact is impervious to scientific assault. It is as necessary to think, as it is impossible to formulate. The massive outlines of a revelation such as this (and it is no other than this), which is sketched in the beginning of Genesis, if we make due allowance for ethnical colouring, are certainly broad and general enough to comprehend the earliest experiences of all the families of the earth. According, therefore, to this view, the resemblances which

we discover between the Greek and Jewish theology are due to the common origin of their respective ancestors at a date long anterior to the severance of the Aryan and the Semitic stocks. Under a revelation vouchsafed to this prehistoric people, the ancestors of the Greeks, together with the rest, must have fallen. The resemblances represent survivals of tradition, not transmissions of belief. But special historical facts and theological doctrines, which belong to a much later and a historic era of the Jewish people, must not be read either into the opening chapters of the book of Genesis, or into the subsequent Greek Mythology.

It is not here possible fully to discuss Bacon's peculiar treatment of myths in his "Wisdom of the Ancients." He regards them as deliberate inventions of kings, philosophers, and statesmen for the purpose of enforcing order in early communities. This interpretation will suit some of the later myths, and a few of the earlier (the myth of Cupid and Psyche, for instance), but must not be generally applied to the solution of the earliest, or indeed of the greater part of the myths. The allegories which he extracts from many Greek myths are beautiful, but are painfully forced. It appears strange to us of this age, with our rigid canons of evidence, that the master of the inductive method of philosophy should have indulged in so hap-hazard and, to us, unscientific a mode of interpretation. Each myth was to him *toton teres atque rotundus* at its birth, flashed full grown from the brain of the far-seeing statesman, "without father," "without descent" from earlier mythical germs, and entirely unrelated to its contemporaries throughout the world. No fact could more clearly demonstrate the infancy of comparative science at the opening of the seventeenth century.

An attempt has thus been made to indicate the manifold elements contained in the myth, to maintain its comprehensiveness of source and purport, to

restrict within their proper limits, to supplement, and to arrange in order of sequence, the conflicting theories propounded. Early custom, religion, physics, poetry, history, and philosophy have claimed their several places in this complex whole. A force so potent and far-reaching, as was the myth in early times, can only be accounted for by assigning to it a meaning at least as pregnant, and a range at least as wide.

One aspect still remains. What were the views of the Greeks themselves, with whom the myth was so great a power, as to the origin, scope and interpretation of their own mythology? How far do their views bear out our surmise? We fear we wrong these honourable Greeks, in keeping till the last their own version of the case.

Carrying back our thoughts to the Hellenic world as it was emerging from the darkness of unrecorded time into the grey dawn of history, about seven hundred years before the Christian era we find it in possession of a rich store of mythology. The whole world was alive in its eyes. Personal agents in the shape of gods, demi-gods, heroes, and powers of Nature were everywhere astir. They were unquestioned realities: their claims on belief were overwhelming. For they had come down through the ages invested with the majesty of a venerable past; and the poet, who mainly presented them for acceptance, was held to be in direct communion with the Muse, whose mouthpiece he was. To question such an authority was a thing unthought of. It is significant, in this aspect, that the poet, with rare exceptions, recorded only the deeds of a bygone age. But, at the close of that century, Greece underwent a change of thought. The past ceased to monopolise the interest of men: the present began to assert its claims. The critical sense was dawning. Poets began to find worthy themes in every-day experiences. A school of physical science, many of whose shrewd guesses at truth are not yet antiquated, began to regard impersonal nature as a distinct study.

A divergence of belief between philosophers and people was imminent. The higher intellects had discovered irrational elements in the myth, the loftier souls questioned the morality of the popular gods, while on the other hand, the faith of the masses remained firm as of old. The leaders of thought were now forced to bring about a settlement. Were they to abandon the whole system of inherited myths, involving, of course, the uprooting of the public religion, or were they to accommodate the myths to a new tone of feeling and judgment? The latter course was adopted. The task was a gigantic one; but gigantic also were the Hellenic intellects of the fifth century before Christ. With Æschylus and Sophocles among the poets, Herodotus and Thucydides among the historians, Socrates and Plato among the philosophers, and Phidias the sculptor to embody their living thoughts in his breathing marble, what could be called impossible? Thus the myths in their hour of need and ready to perish, were not merely saved, but quickened, spiritualised, immortalised.

The tragic poets enlisted in the service of the myths the highest emotions of which the sensitive Athenian was capable—his passion, his patriotism, and his reverence, for it is very observable that mythical characters and legends form the groundwork of the Athenian drama. But all was purified, all raised to the moral and spiritual level of the age. The gods were presented, not in their jealousies and frailties, but in their majesty and justice. Demi-gods and local heroes were likewise purged of their dross, and set forth as types of endurance and national spirit. Thus the poets were not merely interpreters of myths, but in the truest sense makers of myths. This fact alone is sufficient answer to those who would identify a mythopoetic with a barbarous age. Nor need it be supposed that the cultivated Athenian was guilty of any intellectual dishonesty in accepting with faith the remodelled

myth. The natural reverence conceded to matters of tradition, deepened as it was by the appeal of poet and philosopher to all that was noblest in their country's history and truest in their own hearts, was more than enough to secure for the pure and reformed myth an unhesitating allegiance. The historians, in a less degree, fostered this same habit of mind. Herodotus, with his childlike piety, recognised a real historical element in a large proportion of the myths. And the philosophers also lent their moral weight. Plato's treatment of the myth is remarkable. He discountenances attempts to strain it into history or philosophy, but regards it as a most valuable instrument of ethical training. The legislator, in his ideal state, is to suppress all divine and heroic legends which are out of harmony with the philosophers's conception of the gods, and to provide new myths of his own invention. The people must faithfully accept that which he prescribes for their good. The myths of the past had been, as the myths of the future were to be, simple expressions of feeling and imagination, respecting the characters of gods, heroes, and men. Their fitness for the age of which they were the product was ample ground for their existence and acceptation.

Such was, in brief, the Hellenic treatment of its own Mythology. And it is very worthy of attention, as being a type of the repeated treatment of the myth in subsequent revivals of learning. At such crises she has passed through metamorphoses, it is true, but invariably from a lower to a higher grade of life. Unlike one of her offspring, the giant Antæus, she has gained rather than lost strength, as often as some intellectual, spiritual or artistic Hercules has torn her from her mother Earth, and has lifted her into a sublime region of thought and sentiment. It is this very adaptability that she manifests to every change of environment, which is for her a sure pledge of immortality.

W. A. GILL.

K

MR. MORRIS'S "ODYSSEY."<sup>1</sup>

THE dilemma of translations from classical poetry is this: if the play or epic be not translated by a poet, all is lost, while the more the translator is a true poet, the more he inevitably gives of himself, and the more he obscures his original. It is impossible to find the happy mean: the translator who is just poetical enough, and not too much of a poet. These obvious considerations might be illustrated from versions of Homer. Chapman makes Homer Chapman: his rapid but turbid stream rolls down with many a break that is foreign to the bright speed of Homer. Pope, again, makes Homer a rhetorician: he dims his eye for nature, and credits him with points and antitheses of which the Chian man had no conception.

"The swift Achilles in his verse doth show  
As if no Centaur trained him, but Boileau."

Then, turning to translators whom the gods have not made poetical, we find that they, like Lord Derby, do not make Homer poetical either. They offer a Homer wanting the life of him, the music, and the variety, and the rapidity of the style. One is often inclined to think that Mr. Worsley came as near as possible to being the ideal translator of the "Odyssey." He added little of his own; and, if the Spenserian stanza is very unlike the hexameter, at least it has melody and the memories of old romance.

Mr. William Morris is the latest poet who has attempted to render the "Odyssey." It might have been said beforehand that Mr. Morris has all the qualities of the ideal translator. He is distinguished as a narrative poet. He can tell a story well. His

<sup>1</sup> "The Odyssey of Homer," translated by William Morris. Vol. I., London, 1887.

interests, like those of Homer, are in the loves and wars of famous heroes: in all that they wrought and bore by the god's decree, that there might be a song in the ears of men yet to come. He has Homer's love of workmanship, of bronze work, gold work, the marvels of the loom and the tapestry whereon Helen, like Matilda at Bayeux, embroidered the strife of warlike men. Mr. Morris has the Homeric love of wandering in undiscovered and enchanted seas: the Homeric idea of the briefness of life, and the darkness of death. Certainly the author of the story of Jason seems (save Scott) the best fitted of poets since Quintus Smyrnaeus to wake again that old lyre of the hero's:

ἄειδε δ' ἄρα κλέα ἀνθρώπῳ.

One might only fear that his lyre would lack the string which sounds to the delight of battle: the χάρμη, whereof after all there is little in the "Odyssey," till we reach that battle with the Wooers.

In spite of these expectations, one is perhaps a little disappointed in the "Odyssey" of Mr. Morris. Here a reviewer must be understood to speak strictly for himself. Many find in Mr. Morris's version all that they want. They can read him as one reads a good novel, which after all is the test of success in the translation of the Master-romance. A translation appeals to students—who take a kind of artistic interest in seeing difficulties overcome, and in testing and comparing various renderings—but who always read Homer for themselves in the original. For students Mr. Morris's "Odyssey" has plenty of attractions, the attractions of a novel

experiment in a difficult art. A translation also appeals, however, to the unlearned, or not Greek-learned reader; and thus the object is to provide a substitute for Homer. Here the opinion of a lover of poetry like Mr. Bright, of a judge of English poetry who is professedly not Greek-learned, would be an invaluable test. Would such a reader find in Mr. Morris the kind of pleasure that we find in the original epic? Who can ever answer with certainty such a question? To one, at least, it appears that Mr. Morris has obscured somewhat the effect of Homer on an English reader, by putting into his "Odyssey"—not too much of himself as a poet, but too much of himself as a student. Mr. Morris is well known as the admirer and translator of the Sagas, some of which he has brought within the reach of all of us. He has naturally been struck (as who is not?) by the resemblances and analogies between the life and language of heroes like Ajax, and the life and language of heroes like Gretir, or Skarphedin, that noble white Zulu of the *Njala*, that unconquerable Aryan savage. Now certainly the heroic Greek and the heroic Scandinavian life closely resemble each other. The Homeric house might well be illustrated by comparison with the Scandinavian *skali*. The position of women, the love of war (much more passionate in the North), the love of adventure, the structure of society, and many other points, are common to Iceland and to Argos. The literature and style of speech are also akin, and this has perhaps helped to lead Mr. Morris astray. The Sagas, if one may judge by translations, are full of recurring epithets like Homer's, and a liking for periphrases which has left a traditional trace on the style of Homer. We know, from a passage in a fragment of Aristophanes, that the old words, and the ritual words, and expressions like νεῖσθαι ἀμερῆτα κάρητα puzzled Athenian schoolboys, as old Biblical words puzzle schoolboys today. There were Homeric glossaries

written at a very early period in Athenian Homeric studies.

Reflecting probably on all these things, Mr. Morris seems to have made up his mind that all the old formulae of Homer's language should be represented in English by adaptations or imitations of the old formulae of the Sagas. He has fallen back on translations or imitations of ancient Icelandic expressions, and has turned English words from their accepted sense into sense which may once have been etymologically correct, but which is no longer familiar.

Perhaps Mr. Morris has been misled by a praiseworthy desire for accuracy. He finds a word in Homer which probably was difficult to Greeks of Plato's time, and he renders it by a word which is difficult to Englishmen of Mr. Herbert Spencer's time. This may sound very correct, but the result is rather uncomfortable. Mr. Morris too often recalls the writer of Bohn's "crib," who remarks in a note, "Here I flatter myself I have successfully rivalled the obscurity of the original." For example, Mr. Morris takes διάκτορος, an epithet of Hermes. Διάκτορος may mean the "Guide," or it may mean the "Messenger;" but Mr. Morris renders it "the Flitter." The objection to this is obvious. A Greek may not have been sure what διάκτορος meant, and most of Mr. Morris's readers will certainly not know what is meant by a "Flitter." Yet the Greek and the Englishman are not on a level of disadvantage. For to the Greek διάκτορος was familiar: it did not stop him, as a reef stops a ship, to use Cæsar's phrase about unusual words. The Englishman, till he has learned to construe Mr. Morris by aid of Mr. Morris, must be pulled up short by the "Flitter." Now it seems a palpable objection to a version of Homer that it is full of words and phrases which give pause to the ordinary reader, though they may be interpreted by students of old English and of the Scotch ballads. Thus it ap-

pears that one of Mr. Morris's most learned and sympathetic critics was "bothered," if we may say so, by

" But I pray thee there to burn me in all my  
battle-weed,  
And on the sea side hoary to pile the howe  
for me."

It was the *howe* that puzzled Mr. Morshead, though the word, to a Lowland Scot, is perfectly familiar and appropriate. To the common English reader, it is probable that "battle-weed" will be quite as perplexing as "howe." Homer only says *σιν τειχέαν, ἄστρα μοι ἔστρων*, which could not have puzzled any Athenian of Pericles' time. Mr. Morris, of course, gives us "Argus-bane," because it reminds him of Sigurd Fafnir's-bane, *Fafnisbana*. But will the intelligent artisan who is always the court of appeal in these matters (and who never gives a decision), or will the intellectual lady in the country, know what "Argus-bane" means? What Pope would have thought of "Argus-bane," "'tis better only guessing." In short, Mr. Morris's English is often much more unlike modern, or even Biblical English, than Homer's Greek is unlike that of Aristotle's age. Where Homer is archaic, Mr. Morris is archaic. It is all the difference between an early Greek vase, and a late Greek vase of the date when people copied, not well, the work that was early.

"Argus-bane" is one of the least dubious examples of Mr. Morris's Sagastyle. "The yellow Menelaus" (though he owes nothing to the Sagas) is an unlucky rendering of ξανθός, which refers, one presumes, to the yellow locks, not to the complexion, of the lord of Argive Helen. "Burg-bane," for "sacker of cities," is not more fortunate, nor "Wights of the Whirlwind" for the perfectly familiar Harpies. Nor does one at all understand why the poet should constantly speak of "God-folk" and "men-folk," when Homer is only talking of Gods and Men.

The question thus arises, How much is the general correctness, the very

unusual closeness of rendering of Mr. Morris, and how much are the rapidity and honesty, so to speak, of his translation, hampered and damaged by his use of unfamiliar turns and terms? How much has the man of study and science in him damaged and obscured the poet?

By way of attempting to answer this question, and also because we prefer to Mr. Morris's present metre a metre he used long ago, let us compare Mr. Morris, the poet, with Mr. Morris the philologist and historian blended with the poet. He is a poet, pure and simple, in "The Life and Death of Jason." He is a poet added to a student of Icelandic, and of old heroic life, in his version of the "Odyssey." Even in "Jason," however, he is a learned poet, of the school of Virgil or Apollonius Rhodius rather than of Homer.

Here is the passage in which Odysseus greets Nausicaa.

"But alone stood Alcinous' daughter, for  
Athene made her bold  
Of her heart, and from her body all trem-  
bling did withhold;  
So she stood in her place to meet him, and  
he pondered diversely  
Whether he should pray to the fair-faced,  
laying hand upon her knee,  
Or aloof from where he was standing with  
honied speech to pray  
That she would give him a garment and tell  
of the townward way.  
And so to him bethinking at last it seemed  
but good  
With honied words to beseech her aloof  
from where he stood,  
Lest the maid should be wrathful of heart  
if his hand her knees should take.  
So honied words and gainful thenceforth  
withal he spake."

Here the verse is somewhat untuneful, and although there be no strange Saga words, "he pondered diversely" hardly seems a natural or poetical phrase. But all the passage appears harsh and crabbed if we compare with it:

" Thereafter wandering lonely did he meet  
A maid, with girt-up gown and sandalled  
feet,  
Who joyously through flowering grass did  
go,

Holding within her hand an unstrung bow ;  
And, setting eyes on her, he thought, indeed,  
This must be she that made Actaeon bleed :  
For, certes, ere that day he had not seen  
Within that wild, one made so like a queen."

There can be no doubt that Mr. Morris moves much more freely and joyously in his old metre—the metre of Chaucer, of Keats, and of Chapman's "Odyssey," than in the kind of hexameters by which he represents "the strong-winged music of Homer." We will choose another passage, because it illustrates, not merely Mr. Morris's comparative freedom and grace in the metre one had hoped he would use, but because it shows how different are the "romantic" manner and the manner of Homer, the first Master of Romance. The passage tells of the approach to the Siren.

" Now while all things I was telling to my folk and hiding nought,  
That while exceeding swiftly fared on the ship well-wrought  
Toward the island of the Sirens, and the breeze drove fair and well ;  
But now dropped all the breezes and a windless calm befel,  
And the God did all the billows to sleep and slumber lay.  
So therewith arose the shipmen, and struck the sails straitway,  
And in the shiplid stowed them and sat down to the oars forthright,  
And so with the shaven fir-wood they beat the water white.  
Then piecemeal a loaf of wax I sheared with the whetted brass,  
And that same with my sturdy hand I laboured, and brought it to pass  
That it warmed ; for my might constrained it, and the bright beams made it soft,  
The beams of the Sun, the King, the seed of the Rider Aloft.  
Then one by one I anointed the ears of all my men,  
And hand and foot they bound me in mine own ship there and then,  
Upright in the step of the mast, and the rope-yarn thereto tied ;  
Then they sat and beat with their oar-blades the grey sea by our side."

That is Mr. Morris translating Homer, and here is Mr. Morris adrift in the pinnace of his own fancy, "on all the seas of song."

" Now, as they sped along, they presently, Rounding a headland, reached a little bay,

Walled from the sea by splintered cliffs and grey,  
Capped by the thymy hills' green wind-beat head,  
Where 'mid the whin the burrowing rabbits fed.  
And 'neath the cliff they saw a waste of sand,  
'Twixt Nereus' pasture and the high scarped land,  
Whereon, yet far off, could their eyes behold  
White bodies moving, crowned and girt with gold,  
Wherfrom it seemed that lovely music welled.  
So when all this the grey-eyed queen beheld,  
She said : ' O Jason, I have made thee wise  
In this and other things ; turn then thine eyes  
Seaward, and note the ripple of the sea,  
Where there is hope as well as fear for thee.  
Nor look upon the death that lurketh there  
'Neath the grey cliff, though sweet it seems and fair ;  
For thou art young upon this day to die.  
Take then the helm, and gazing steadily  
Upon the road to Greece, make strong thine hand,  
And steer us toward the lion-haunted land :  
And thou, O Thracian ! if thou ere hast moved  
Men's hearts, with stories of the Gods who loved,  
And men who suffered, move them on this day,  
Taking the deadly love of death away,  
That even now is stealing over them,  
While still they gaze upon the ocean's hem,  
Where their undoing is if they but knew.' "

These contrasts may not prove that Mr. Morris would have been well advised to translate the "Odyssey" in the measure of his "Jason." They may only show that he moves most lightly, as is natural, when he has not the constraints of the translator. As to metre, his measure enables him to keep very close to the original because the English line is as long as the Greek. But he has to fill out his lines often with uncalled-for words.

" In the hollow den he cooped us with the very might of his hand."

Here "very" may stand for the double words *κρατερῆφι βίηφι*, but it certainly sounds superfluous. Expressions like "in such-wise"

are troublesome; and we may be permitted to smile when Athene says that Ulysses "is wise in many a gin." But this is a return to the complaint of Mr. Morris's odd words, "Telemachus' baleful bane" and all the rest of them. These words must appear far more odd to the general reader, who wants a translation of Homer, than to critics who know what Mr. Morris is driving at, even when they think that he driveth furiously. But the critic has in his mind Homer's entire absence of pedantry, and research, and affectation, his direct speech always natural and simple, even where half obsolete and to us obscure. Perhaps the general reader will not be hampered by reflecting thus; and, after all, it will really give him very little trouble to master Mr. Morris's meaning, even when his words, or his use of them, are least familiar. When he has taken this trouble, he will find in Mr. Morris's "Odyssey" the English version which best combines closeness and accuracy with spirit. Mr. Morris does not even allow himself the rare licenses of Mr. Worsley, who now and then threw in a pretty thing of his own. He always writes as he conceives Homer would have expressed himself in English. We may not agree with him in his choice of equivalent words, and often the general effect of a passage will appear to us quaint and crabbed. The following passage is an example from the story of Proteus.

"I spake and that Godhead's glory again took up the tale :  
 'Yea, all shall I tell thee, O friend, that thereof thou have no doubt :  
 When up to the midmost heaven the sun hath wended about,  
 The Sea-hounds' Elder unerring cometh up from the brine outright,  
 Along with the breath of the west-wind with the darkling ripple digit,  
 And in the hollow places of the rocks he falleth asleep,  
 And about him the flock of the sea-calves, the brood of the Maid of the Deep,  
 Lie sleeping gathered together, come up from the hoary sea,

And they breathe forth a bitter savour of the brine where the flood-wells be.  
 Now thither will I lead thee when the dawn beginneth to show,  
 And lay thee there all duly : but three whom thou dost know  
 To be the best of thy fellows from thy fair-decked ships choose well.  
 But that Elder's baleful magic to thee will I fully tell :  
 For first unto numbering his sea-calves and telling them o'er will he fall,  
 But when his count is accomplished, and he hath beheld them all,  
 Then lieth he down amidst them, as a shepherd amidst of his sheep.  
 But so soon as ye have beheld him that he lieth there asleep,  
 Then mind ye of your starkness and to your might look ye,  
 That ye hold him, as sore as he striveth, and longeth to be free.  
 He will try it and turn into all things, all such as creep upon earth,  
 And he will be the water, and the fire that of God hath birth.  
 But all unmoved do ye hold him, and press him all the more.  
 But when he shall speak unto you in the shape that he had before,  
 And he being then nought other than ye saw him lying asleep,  
 Then refrain your might and loosen that Elder of the Deep.  
 But ask him which of the Gods it is that is hard on thee,  
 And ask of thine homeward faring, and thy road o'er the fishy sea."

Nothing can be more spirited, or more accurate. But why does Proteus come forth "outright," except to get in the favourite word "digit," which Malory too was fond of using, and which adds to the impression of oddness or quaintness? And perhaps a reader accustomed to Elders of the Kirk may have pious but incongruous associations with that "Elder of the Deep."

All these things are very much affairs of personal experience. How does it strike one? We can reply to that question. One can say that Mr. Morris's "Odyssey" strikes one as a valuable and interesting experiment, and as a translation with high and original qualities. It would be hard to name another that might be so confidently recommended to a modern reader ignorant of Homer, and willing

to take a little trouble, willing to read at least till the style becomes familiar. But it is not the ideal translation one expected from Mr. Morris. That is because one expected (what is perhaps impossible) the freedom, fluency, and music of the "*Jason*," combined with the conscientious closeness of the present version. Even in this version, however, some passages seem ideally good. The following (in which a slight fault of interpretation is of no importance) is a specimen.

" And Heracles the mighty I saw when these  
went by ;  
His image indeed : for himself mid the Gods  
that never die  
Sits glad at the feast, and Hebe fair-ancled  
thero doth hold,  
The daughter of Zeus the mighty and Here  
shod with gold.  
But about him was noise of the dead, as of  
birds fear-wildered in flight  
About and about ; and he wended as the  
dusk of the midmost night,  
With his bow all bare in his hand and the  
arrow laid on the string,  
And peering around and about him, as who  
would loose at a thing ;  
And his breast was girded about with a belt  
of wonder and fear,  
And of gold was that girdle-fashioned, and  
strange things inwrought there,  
As bears, and boars of the woodland, and  
lions gleaming-eyed,

And days of strife and battles, and murders  
of men that have died ;  
And he who that marvellous girdle by his  
craft did fashion and lay  
Hath never wrought such another, nor will  
do yet on a day."

One does not see how this can be surpassed by any translator in any vehicle of modern words. The second volume of Mr. Morris's "*Odyssey*" will be anxiously expected by lovers of poetry, and of Homer. It will complete the most honest and straightforward translation of the poem that ever was written in English verse : a translation in which nothing is to be regretted but the occasional jars in the music, and the occasional annoyance of words that, used in this place, belong rather to philology than to literature, and, perhaps, are not wholly correct as philology. Now, nothing can be more un-Homeric than the search for obscure old words, and phrases doubtfully learned. That is Mr. Morris's weak side : he knows too much, and perhaps does not always know it correctly ; and this lore he thrusts on the unlearned reader, to his confusion. An English Homer should not need notes explanatory of the English.

## THE WHITE WINTER.

"Jam satis terris nivis atque dñe  
Grandinis misit Pater."

MAN, but it's vexin'! There's the law  
For five months noo been white wi' snaw,  
And, when we lookit for a thaw  
An' lowser weather,  
It's gatherin' for anither fa'  
As black as ever!

It's no' alane that fodder's dear,  
Yowes stervin', an' the lambin' near,  
An' winter owre the Ochils drear  
Drivin' unstintit,—  
But gudesake! what's come owre the year?  
An' what's ahint it?

Wha kens but what oor axle-tree  
'S been slew'd aboot, or dung ajee,<sup>1</sup>  
An' aff thro' space awa' we flee  
In a new orbit?  
Whilk maks the seasons, as we see,  
Be sair disturbkit.

Wha kens but what we've seen the heel  
O' simmer in a last fareweel?  
Nae mair green gow'ny braes to speel<sup>2</sup>  
Wi' joyfu' crook,  
Or dip in Devon where a wiel<sup>3</sup>  
Invites to dook.

What ance has been may be ance mair.  
And ance, as learnèd clerks declare,  
This planet's fortune was to fare,  
In ages auld,  
Thro' regions o' the frigid air  
Past kennin' cauld.

The snow a' owre lies sax feet deep:  
Ae half oor time we're howkin'<sup>4</sup> sheep:  
We havena had a blanket sleep  
Sin' the new year;  
And here we're at oor hin'most neep,<sup>5</sup>  
An' term-time near.

<sup>1</sup> Dung ajee, knocked aslant.      <sup>2</sup> Speel, climb.      <sup>3</sup> Wiel, pool.  
<sup>4</sup> Howkin, digging out.      <sup>5</sup> Neep, turnip.

It's just as bad wi' ither folk.  
A shepherd's missin' wi' his flock;  
An eagle's ravagin' the Knock;<sup>1</sup>  
An' nearer hame  
A dearth o' whisky's at the Crock,<sup>2</sup>  
An' aumries tame!<sup>3</sup>

The roads are blockit up a' roun' 's:  
Silent are a' the seas an' soun's;  
And at the very trons<sup>4</sup> in touns  
It's hoch-deep<sup>5</sup> lyin'.  
In fac', the winter's broken boun's,  
There's nae denyin'.

Come back, come back, oor ain auld sun,  
Thy auld-appointit path to run!  
And a' the freits<sup>6</sup> that were begun  
To shore<sup>7</sup> us ill,  
Shall in the crackin' of a gun  
Flee owre the hill!

Then, as of auld, when skies are clear,  
An' springin' corn begins to breer,<sup>8</sup>  
Those joys the shepherd's heart shall cheer  
That charm'd of yore,  
And life on Devon be as dear  
As heretofore!

HUGH HALIBURTON,  
(Shepherd of the Ochils).

<sup>1</sup> *Knock*, hill.

<sup>2</sup> *The Crock*, Crook-of-Devon, a village at the foot of the Ochils.

<sup>3</sup> *Aumries tame*, cupboards empty.

<sup>4</sup> *Trons*, market-places.

<sup>5</sup> *Hoch-deep*, knee-deep.

<sup>6</sup> *Freits*, superstitious fears.

<sup>7</sup> *Shore*, threaten

<sup>8</sup> *Breer*, braid.

WITH THE IMMORTALS.<sup>1</sup>

BY F. MARION CRAWFORD.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE moon rose higher and higher in the cloudless sky, bathing the terrace in silver, and lending in her turn to men the light she borrowed from heaven. For some minutes no one spoke, and it was as though all nature lay in a trance while the visions of heaven passed by. It was the hour when in Eastern lands the lotus unfolds its heavy leaves, to take up the wondrous dream broken by the scorching day. It was the hour when in the laurel-groves of Italy the nightingale raises her voice in passionate sorrow for the blood she has helped to shed and can never wash away. All the party were silent, realising perhaps in that moment the whole beauty of the scene. Heine leaned back in his seat and looked steadily at the moon, resting his elbows on the carved arms of the chair, and clasping his delicate white fingers before him.

Suddenly, a wonderful strain of music broke the silence. Some one was playing on the piano in the great hall, and through the open windows the sound floated out to the terrace. No one dared to speak, though all started in surprise. It was a wild Polish mazourka, fitful, passionate, and sad, woven in strange movement: now sweeping forward in a burst of proud hope, full of the rush of the dance, the ring of spurs, the timely-measured tread of women's feet, the indescribable grace of slender figures in refined yet rapid motion—the whole breathing a reckless delight in the pleasure of the moment, a defiant power to be glad in the very jaws of death. Then, with the contrast of true passion, the pace

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1887, by F. Marion Crawford.

slackens, the melody sways fitfully in the uncertain measure; and sadness, waking in the harmony, trembles despairing for one moment in the muffled chords. But again the dance awakes: the stronger rhythm breaks out again and, dashing through the veil of melancholy, seizes on body and soul and whirls them down the storm of wild, luxurious delight.

"That must be Chopin!" exclaimed Diana: "but I never heard Gwendoline play it—"

She stopped short in surprise. She had imagined that Gwendoline had slipped away to the piano during the silence, but looking up she saw her in her place.

"It is by Chopin," murmured Heine with a smile. "It is Chopin himself."

All rose to their feet and hastened to the hall. At the piano sat a man with a fair and beautiful face, whose dress resembled that of Heine himself, though it betrayed a far more careful attention to details. There was about him a wonderful air of distinction, an unspeakable atmosphere of refinement and superiority over ordinary men. He had the look which tradition ascribes to kings, but which nature, in royal irony, more often bestows upon peniless persons of genius. His fair hair was fine and silky as spun gold: his skin transparent as a woman's: his features delicately aquiline and noble; and in his soft eyes there shone a clear and artistic intelligence, a gentle and quiet spirit, neither weak nor effeminate, capable of boundless courage and of heroic devotion when roused by the touch of sympathy.

He rose as the party approached him, and they saw that he was short

and very slender. He smiled, half apologetically, and made a courteous inclination.

"Perhaps the introduction of a dead man is hardly an introduction at all," he said in a muffled voice, which, however, was not unpleasant to the ear. "I will save my friend Heine the trouble—I am Frédéric Chopin."

Gwendoline in her delight at meeting her favourite composer would gladly have pressed him to remain at the piano, but hospitality forbade her. She sat down, and the others followed her example. The two dead men glanced at each other in friendly recognition, and took their places in the circle. They looked so thoroughly alive that it was impossible to feel any uneasiness in their society; and perhaps none but Augustus and Lady Brenda, who had touched Heine's icy hand, realised fully the strangeness of the situation. But Chopin was perfectly at his ease. He did not seem to admit that his presence could possibly cause surprise. He sat quietly in his chair and looked from one to the other of his hosts, as though silently making their acquaintance.

"What an ideal life!" he exclaimed. "If I could live again, I would live as you do, in this beautiful place over the sea, far from noise, dust, and all that is detestable."

"It is a part of fairyland," answered Heine. "Do you remember? It was only last year that we came here together and sat on the rocks and tried to think what the people were like who once lived here, and whether any one would ever live here again. And you wished there were a piano in the old place—you have your wish now."

"It is not often such wishes are realised," said Chopin. "It is rarely indeed that I can touch a piano now, though I hear much music. It interests me immensely to watch the progress of what Mozart began."

"It sickens me to see what has grown in literature from the ruins of what I helped to demolish," answered Heine.

"Believe me, my dear friend," returned the musician, "without romance there is neither music nor literature."<sup>22</sup>

"What do you mean by romance, exactly?" asked Gwendoline, anxious to stimulate the conversation which had been begun by the two friends.

"Heine will give you one definition—I will give you another," answered Chopin.

"I never really differed from you," said his friend. "But give your definition of romance: I would like to hear it."

"It is the hardest thing in the world to define, and yet it is something which we all feel. I think it is based upon an association of ideas. When we say that a place is romantic, we unconsciously admit that its beauty suggests some kind of story to our mind, most generally a love-story. Such scenery is not necessarily grand, but it is necessarily beautiful. I do not think that a man standing on the summit of Mont Blanc could say that it was a romantic spot. It is splendid indeed, but it is uninhabited and uninhabitable. It suggests no love-story. It is hugely grand and vast, like Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, or like the Great Pyramid. But it is not romantic. There is more romance in a Polish landscape, with a little white village in the foreground, surrounded by flat green fields and green woods, cut symmetrically in all directions by straight white roads, and innocent of hills. One may at least fancy a fair-haired boy making love to a still fairer girl, just where the brook runs between the wood and the meadow. No—Mont Blanc is not romantic. Come down from the snow-peaks—here, for instance, where the wild rocks hang and curl in crests like a petrified whirlpool, but where the walls of this old castle suggest lives and deeds long forgotten. You have romance at once. From the grey battlements some Moorish maiden may have once looked her last upon the white sails of her corsair-lover's long black ship. The fair young Conraddin may have lain hidden here

before Frangipani betrayed him to his death in Naples. Here Bayard came, perhaps, after the tournament of Barletta. Here Giovanna may have rested—she may even have plotted here the murder of her husband."

"I did not know you were such an historian," interrupted Heine with a smile.

"I have learned much since I died," answered Chopin quietly. "But I am encroaching on your ground. I only want to prove that it is easy to see the romantic element in a place which we can associate with people. If none of those things really happened here, it seems very simple to imagine that they might have happened, and that is the same thing in history."

"Absolutely the same," assented Augustus, whose favourite theory was that nobody knew anything.

"Very good," continued the composer. "Romance is the possibility of associating the ideas of people with an object presented to the senses, apart from the mere beauty of the object. I say that much magnificent music pleases intensely by the senses alone. Music is a dialogue of sounds. The notes put questions, and answer them. In fugue-writing the second member is technically called the answer. When there is no answer, or if the answer is bad, there is no music at all. The ear tells that. But such a musical dialogue of sounds may please intensely by the mere satisfaction of the musical sense; or it may please because, besides the musical completeness, it suggests human feelings and passions, and so appeals to a much larger part of our nature. I do not think the Great Pyramid suggests feelings and passions in spite of all its symmetry. It may have roused a sympathetic thrill in the breast of Cheops; but it does not affect us as we are affected by the interior of Saint Peter's in Rome, or by Westminster Abbey, or by Giotto's Tower. Those are romantic buildings, for they are not only symmetrical, but they also tell us a tale of human life and death, and hope and sorrow, which

we can understand. To my mind romantic music is that which expresses what we feel, besides satisfying our sense of musical fitness. I think that Mozart was the founder of that school: I laboured for it myself: Wagner has been the latest exponent of it."

"I adore Wagner," said Diana. "But it always seems to me that there is something monstrous in his music. Nothing else expresses what I mean."

"The monstrous element can be explained," answered Chopin. "Wagner appeals to a vast mass of popular tradition which really only exists in Germany and Scandinavia. He then brings those traditions suddenly before our minds with stunning force, and gives them an overpowering reality. I leave it to you whether the impression must not necessarily be monstrous when we suddenly realise in the flesh, before our eyes, such tales as that of Siegmund and Siegfried, or of Parzifal and the Holy Grail. It is great, gigantic—but it is too much. I admit that I experience the sensation, dead as I am, when I stand among the living at Bayreuth and listen. But I do not like the sensation. I do not like the frantic side of this modern romanticism. The delirious effects and excesses of it stupefy without delighting. I do not want to realise the frightful crimes and atrocious actions of mythological men and beasts, any more than I want to see a man hanged or guillotined. I think romance should deal with subjects not wholly barbarous; and should try to treat them in a refined way, because no excitement which is not of a refined kind can be anything but brutalising. Man has enough of the brute in him already, without being taught to cultivate his taste for blood by artificial means. Perhaps I am too sensitive. I hate blood, I detest commonplace; but I detest even more the furious contortions of ungoverned passion."

"But you cannot say that Wagner is exaggerated in his effects," argued Diana.

"No: they are well studied, and the

result is stupendous when they are properly reproduced. He is great—almost too great. He makes one realise the awful too vividly. He produces intoxication rather than pleasure. He is an egotist in art. He is determined that when you have heard him you shall not be able to listen to any one else, as a man who eats opium is disgusted with everything when he is awake. I believe there is a pitch in art at which pleasure becomes vicious. The limit certainly exists in sculpture and painting as well as in literature, just as when a man drinks too much wine he is drunk. The object of art is not to make life seem impossible, any more than the object of drinking wine is to lose one's senses. Art should nourish the mind, not drown it. To say that Wagner's own mind, and the minds of some of his followers were of such strong temper that nothing less than his music could excite them pleasantly, is not an answer. The Russian Mujik will drink a pint of *vodka* in the early morning; and when he has drunk it, he is gayer than the Italian who has taken a little cup of coffee. You would probably think his gaiety less refined than that of the Italian, though there is more of it. It will also be followed by a headache; but the moral headache after an orgy of modern art is worse than the headache from too much *vodka*. It is like Heine's 'toothache in the heart.' He used to say that the best filling for that was compounded of lead, and of a certain powder invented by Berthold Schwarz. Romanticism can go too far, like everything else. The Hermes of Olympia was descended from a clumsy but royal race of Egyptian granite blocks; but he is the historical ancestor of the vilest productions of modern sculpture. Modern art is drunk—drunk with the delight of expressing excessively what should not be expressed at all: drunk with the indulgence of the senses until the intellect is clouded and dull, or spasmodically frantic, by turns: drunk

with the vulgar self-satisfied vanity of a village coxcomb. Ah, for art's sake let poor art be kept sober until the heaven-born muses deign to pay us another visit!"

"Amen!" exclaimed Heine devoutly. "The same things are true of literature. But I admire Wagner, nevertheless, though his music terrifies me. I think Mozart was the Raphael, Wagner the Michael Angelo of the opera. Any one may choose between the two, for it is a matter of taste. But, in music, the development from the one to the other seems to me more rational than it has been in literature."

"How do you mean?" asked Gwendoline.

"I think music has advanced better than literature. They were both little boys once; but the one has grown into a great, dominating, royal giant: the other into a greedy, foul-mouthed, cowardly ruffian. There are bad musicians and good writers, of course. The bad musicians do little harm, but the good writers occupy the position of Lot in the condemned cities. They are the mourners at the funeral of Romance. The mass of literary men to-day are but rioters at the baptismal feast of Realism, the Impure!"

"What a sweeping condemnation!" exclaimed Augustus. "I thought that you yourself were a supporter of Realism, or declared yourself to be, though your lyrics are certainly very romantic."

"I was the renegade monk from the monastery of the Romantists," said Heine. "A Frenchman once told me so. But when I grew old and married, I hankered for the dear old atmosphere, and my little French wife helped me to breathe it again."

"Our great modern realist, Ernest Renan, says of himself, half regretfully, that he feels like a *religieux manqué*," said Augustus.

"I can understand that," said Heine. "But when I was young the word romance stunk in my nostrils. It meant Platen."

"And what does it mean to you now?" inquired Gwendoline, who wanted to lead the dead poet back to the point.

"You would have a definition, madam?" he replied. "Romance is a beautiful woman, with a dead pale skin, and starry eyes and streaming raven hair; and when I look into her sweet dark face I could wear a ton of armour on my back, and cleave a Saracen to the chine with my huge blade for her sake, or go barefoot to Jerusalem, or even read Platen's poetry all through. But she looks so strangely at me with her great black eyes that I am never altogether sure whether she is quite real and quite serious. I only know that she is very beautiful, and that I love her to distraction."

#### CHAPTER V.

"But that is a definition from fairy-land," said Chopin with his soft, sweet smile.

"And you want one from the library of a student, I suppose," answered Heine. "Romance is the modern epic. I forget who said so, but it is true in a limited way. The Romantic languages were those Latin tongues which were not Latin, but Berlinish."

"In other words—slang," suggested Augustus.

"Slang—exactly. *Latinus grossus qui facit tremare pilastros*, as the Roman schoolboy calls it."

"Please translate!" exclaimed Lady Brenda.

"It means anything: it means the Romantic dialect—a coarse thick Latin that would make the columns shake. The words are not all in the dictionary, madam, but metaphorically they are in most people's mouths. It afterwards became the most elegant language of its age, and has given the name of romantic to the school of literature it founded. The first romantic writings were in that language—the love-songs of the Troubadours—and I have seen in an old library in Siena a very beautiful manuscript collection of some of them,

with the original music and words by Jehan Bretel."

"What were they like?" asked Gwendoline eagerly.

"I can remember a stanza or two:

' Mi chant sont tout plain d'ire et de douleur  
Pour vous dame ke je ai tant aimée  
Que je ne sai se je chant u se pleur  
Ainsi m'estant souffrir me destinée  
Mais se Dieu plaist encor verrai le jour  
Kamour sera cangie en autre tour  
Si vous donra envers moi millour pensée  
Chanson vaten gardé ne remanoir  
Pri celi ki plus jaime pour ke souvent par  
li soiez cantée.'

The spelling is very curious, but the sentiment is unmistakable and the language is Provençal. There is the origin of romance in the Romansch language. Those songs preserved the customs of those times—the Troubadour with his lute below the castle wall, the obdurate lady behind the lattice in her tower, the life-and-death seriousness of love in the eleventh century—it is all there, and we call it romance. The literature of love-songs continued to spread after the customs of those days had passed away, but it did not move with the times, though it increased. The knight in armour, the lute, and the lady with her scarf, were preserved like curious zoological specimens in spirits, and are the foundation of all romance. Then we had Germans and Englishmen who wrote long epic romances in other languages, such as Wolfram von Eschenbach and Sir Thomas Mallory, who got his 'Morte d'Arthur' from the French. A modern poet owes much of his fame to his treatment of the same subject, which shows that the subject is not yet worn out. But though the old songs still stir us, they are not enough for us nowadays. The frantic fighting, the melancholy tragedy, the black and white magic which appealed to the imagination of a freebooting baron of the Black Forest in the tenth century, do not appeal to ours. The French pastoral romances were an attempt to change the form of the solemn chivalric epic of earlier

<sup>1</sup> From a fine illuminated manuscript in the Municipal Library of Siena.

times into something lighter and more gay. But, unlike the chivalric epic, the pastoral had no foundation in real life, and consequently disappeared, almost without leaving a trace. The modern romantic novel is a prose epic, generally founded on modern life."

"And what is the modern realistic novel?" asked Diana.

"It is the prose without the epic," answered the poet. "It is therefore the opposite of romance in every respect. It sets aside all invention, and takes for its standpoint the principle that a hero is not necessary to a story, and that every-day life, with such episodes as it may chance to bring forth, should be of sufficient interest to everybody to make everybody ready to dispense for ever with imagination. The Realists say that a man may learn more from being shown what he is than from being told what he should be. The Romantists say that if a man will study the ideal he can to some extent imitate it. When I was a young man romance stood on a low level. The mechanically correct and spiritually feeble performances of our little poets did not please me. Goethe was a Realist, and I determined to be a Realist. I did not perceive that Goethe was also a Romantist; and that while he was well able to paint men as they are, he had a surpassing gift for describing them as they should be. I believe that literature without realism cannot last. But I believe also that literature without romance cannot interest."

"Nor life without romance, either," said Gwendoline.

"Oh! Do you think so?" exclaimed Lady Brenda. "I am sure I know many people who are not at all romantic, but whose lives are very interesting to themselves."

"People who make money an object," answered Augustus. "But they have a romance, nevertheless, and a very pretty one—the story of the loves of the pound, the shilling, and the penny, told in many manuscript volumes with a detail worthy of Balzac."

"Yes," said Heine with a smile, "the love of a Hamburg banker for a dollar is 'wonderful—passing the love of women.'"

"The sense of romance must be instinctive," said Diana. "We distinguish at a glance between what is romantic and what is not, as we distinguish between black and white. For instance, Alexander the Great is a romantic character: Julius Caesar is not. I do not see that in those cases the explanation is true which ascribes romance to the traditions of knights-errant, troubadours and tournaments."

"That is true," said Chopin. "Just as the primeval song of the Arab and Hindoo peasant is romantic, while Chinese music is not."

"Judas Maccabaeus was a romantic character," put in Heine. "Moses was not, though he was a greater man. Judas Maccabaeus was the Cromwell of the Jews, and it is impossible to read his history without a thrill of enthusiasm. I suppose that is why the early Church instituted the feast of the Maccabean martyrs on the first of August, though they were Jews, put to death before the birth of Christ for the Jewish faith by Antiochus Epiphanes—a mother and her seven sons. Judas Maccabaeus was undoubtedly a hero."

"Then our whole theory of romance falls to the ground!" said Lady Brenda.

"I think not," answered Augustus. "It is enough to extend it a little, and to say that all men and women who have acted under the influence of strong and good passions have been romantic characters."

"That is not enough, either," objected Heine. "I do not think that they need have acted nobly, nor necessarily under the influence of good passions. Alexander, burning Persepolis under the influence of Thaïs's smiles and Timotheus's song, is a romantic character enough; but the action was not noble, nor the passion good."

"But was he romantic in that case?" asked Lady Brenda. "It was rather like Nero burning Rome, you know."

"Perhaps there is a doubt on the subject," replied the poet. "It may be a question of individual taste. Take another instance out of recent times: Was Giovanna of Naples, the first—the daughter of Robert—a romantic character or not?"

"Of course," answered Lady Brenda.

"Was her love for Luigi of Taranto a romantic passion?"

"I suppose so," admitted the lady.

"Then the murder of her husband, Andreas of Hungary, which she planned and caused to be executed out of her love for Luigi, her cousin, was romantic. There is no doubt of it. Many murders have a strong romantic colour. Christina of Sweden causing Monaldeschi to be killed at Fontainebleau is another instance. There was nothing noble or good about either of those cases."

"I yield," said Augustus. "Then suppose we say that men and women, acting under the influence of strong passions, are romantic characters?"

"There is more truth in that," replied Heine; "but it does not include enough."

"It does not tell me why I feel that the Arab is romantic while the Chinaman is not," remarked Chopin.

"My dear friend," said the other, "we know very little about Chinamen, and their appearance does not suggest romantic thoughts."

"True; but why!" insisted the composer, who felt that there was something in his question.

"It appears," said Augustus, "that some races are fundamentally excluded from all connection with our ideas of romance; but I believe that is because we cannot get so near to them, being by nature so different from them, as to be able to understand their feelings and passions."

"I have heard that Chinese music has sixty-six keys," remarked Chopin. "That would account for their music not being comprehensible to us. Then

it follows that unless people and their feelings come readily within our understanding, we do not connect them with any idea of romance."

"Yes," answered Heine, "and the more we know them, the more we appreciate the romantic element. No schoolboy thinks Achilles half as romantic as Rob Roy; and yet Achilles is one of the most romantic characters in all epic poetry."

"Then the *Iliad* is a romance?" inquired Gwendoline.

"It is a big romance, with a big hero in big times, and we call it an epic," replied the poet. "Moreover, it is written in magnificent verse. The modern romance is an infinitesimal epic of which Tom is the hero, Sarah Jane the heroine, and a little modern house with green blinds and an iron railing is the scene of action. But Tom and Jane love each other almost as much as Achilles and Briseis, and are a great deal happier; and if the little house catches fire when Tom is out, and he comes back just in time to plunge through the flames and carry off Sarah Jane with the loss of his eyebrows and beard, and at the risk of his life, he is just as much of a hero as Achilles when he put on his new armour and went to avenge Patroclus by killing Hector and the Trojans. For a man cannot do more than risk his life with his eyes open for the sake of what he loves, whether he be Achilles or Tom. The essential part of the romance is something which shall call out the strongest qualities in the natures of the actors in it; because all strong actions interest us, and if they are also good they rouse our admiration. And if those strong actions are done for the sake of love, or of what we call honour, or to free a nation from slavery, they strike us as romantic."

"Because all those things," remarked Augustus, "are closely associated with modern romance from its beginning. The mediæval knight was the impersonation of love, honour and patriotism. Also, because those are

the feelings most deeply felt by the human heart; and in spite of all that realism can do, stories of love, honour and patriotism will always, and to the end of all time, appeal to every one who has a soul. The Realists, of course, say that there is no soul, and that love, honour and patriotism are conventional terms, as right and wrong are conventional conceptions. That is paltry stuff. But the actions may be bad, and yet be romantic where love is the subject; and as that is the most usual subject for romance, it follows that men have endeavoured to treat it in the greatest variety of situations. Bad or good, it always interests. Our sympathy for fair Rosamond is at least as great as that we feel for Anne Boleyn."

"I fancy it is not certain whether the most romantic characters excite the most sympathy," said Lady Brenda.

"After they are dead they generally do," answered the poet, with a smile. "When we think of a romantic character, we always fancy to ourselves that it must have been very charming to be the hero or heroine of all the thrilling scenes in which he or she took part. In fiction the romantic character has been worn out, partly because fiction is never so extraordinary as reality. The result is that in modern books we are often most drawn towards some minor character of whom we feel at the end of the book that we have not seen enough, simply because we have not been bored by him. But the romance of history does not wear out. There is the same difference between people in history and people in fiction which exists between a real king and a stage-king with a tinsel crown. It is easy enough to dress an actor in royal robes, and to tell people that the crown is of real gold, eighteen carats fine: it is quite another matter to find words for the sham king to speak, and kingly actions for him to perform. For the construction of a good epic you must have both, or you must find both; and that is a little hard when one has but a little acquaintance with

kings. It is not everybody who can say with Voltaire: 'I have three or four kings whom I am petting.'<sup>1</sup> But history presents us with the real king, in flesh and blood! His actions are harmonious, because they have actually been performed by the same man. Few writers of fiction nowadays have the combined imagination, accuracy and versatility necessary to invent and describe a series of actions, thoughts, and words, so harmonious as to make the reader feel that one man could really have spoken, thought and acted as the author makes his hero act, speak and think. The writer then separates himself from romanticism altogether, and confines himself to describing things he has actually seen, and of which he is positively sure. But he finds it hard to make his books interesting with such materials. Failing greatness, he sees that there is a short cut to popularity. If a writer cannot be sublime, he can at least be disgusting; and to excite disgust is, he thinks, better than to excite no notice at all."

"I think you are unjust to the Realists," said Gwendoline. "I do not think that realistic books are always disgusting, by any means."

"No," answered Heine; "but they are more likely to be. With the genius of Goethe one may be realistic without being repulsive. But Goethe himself said that to call a thing bad which is bad does no good, whereas to call a bad thing good does immeasurable harm. Many Realists call bad things good."

"So do many Romantists," objected Gwendoline. "And I do not see that we are any nearer to knowing what romance really is. Your beautiful woman with the starry eyes does not satisfy me. That is poetry, but it does not explain my feelings."

"I believe I can define romance, after listening to you all," said Chopin, who had not spoken for some time. "My own definition only applied to music, but it may be extended. In

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Tronchin.

the first place romance consists in the association of certain ideas with certain people either in history or in fiction. The people must belong to some race of beings of whom we know enough to understand their passions and to sympathise with them. The ideas must be connected with the higher passions of love, patriotism, devotion, noble hatred, profound melancholy, sublime exaltation, and the like. The lower passions in romance are invariably relegated to the traditional villain, who serves as a foil for the hero. Shorten all that and say that our romantic sense is excited by associating ideas of the higher passions, good and bad, with people whom we can understand, and in such a way as to make us feel with them."

"I do not think we shall get any nearer than that," said Augustus Chard. "It explains at once why we think that Alexander was a romantic character. While Julius Cæsar was not, Alexander was always full of great passions, good or bad. Cæsar was calm, impassive, superior to events. Alexander burnt a city to please a woman. Cæsar found in a woman's love a pretext for conquering her kingdom and reducing the queen who loved him to the position of his vassal. Cleopatra was a romantic character, but she was unfortunate in her choice of men. Cæsar was murdered: she murdered her husband: Antony killed himself for her; and she concluded the tragedy by killing herself for Antony, after her son and Cæsar's had also been put to death. There is material for a dozen romances in her life, but if she were a character of fiction we should say her story was simply impossible. As it is, her history is a romance of the most tremendous proportions."

"I think Cæsar was romantic, too," said Diana. "He had outgrown romance when he conquered the world. He must have been very different when he was young."

"Very different," said a placid voice from one of the windows.

## CHAPTER VI.

A MAN stood outside in the moonlight, looking in. His tall and slender figure was wrapped in a mantle of some rich material: the folds reflected the moonbeams with a purple sheen, circling the straight neck and then falling to the ground behind the shoulder. On his brow a dark wreath of laurel leaves sat like a royal crown above his high white forehead. The aquiline nose, broadly modelled at the nostrils, but very clearly cut and delicate, gave to his face an expression of supreme, refined force, which was strengthened and completed by the even and beautifully chiselled mouth and the prominent square chin. His eyes were very black, but without lustre, of that peculiar type in which it is impossible to distinguish the pupil from the surrounding iris.

"It is Cæsar," said Augustus, under his breath, as he rose to greet the newcomer.

"Yes, I am Cæsar," answered the calm voice of the dead conqueror. He came forward and stood in the midst of the party, so that the lamplight fell upon his grand face.

"You spoke of me and, being near, I heard you. You are not afraid to take a dead man's hand? No—why should you be?"

The hand he held out was long and nervous and white, looking as though the fingers possessed the elastic strength of steel.

"Are we in a dream?" asked Diana in low tones, turning to Heine. The poet sighed.

"You are but a dream to us," he said softly. "We are the reality—the sleepless reality of death."

"Yes, we are very real," said Cæsar, seating himself in a large carved chair that might have served for an imperial throne, and looking slowly around upon the assembled party. "You were speaking of my life. You were saying that I was not a romantic character. Do not smile at my using the word. In nineteen centuries of wandering I

have learned to speak of Romantists and Realists. I was not romantic. Could Homer himself have made an epic poem about my life? I think not. Homer had traditions to help him, and Virgil had both Homer and the traditions. The purpose of my life was to overthrow tradition and to found a new era for the world. I was a modern. I was a source of realism. There was nothing mythical about me. Romance grew out of the decay of what I founded. I do not think that the romantic sense existed in men of my day, though the popular respect for the ancients was even then immense, and Rome was full of traditions. It is only by extending the term that anything can be called romantic which happened earlier than ten centuries after my death."

The living members of the party, awed by the strange presence, held their breath while Cæsar was speaking, and the smooth inflections of his calm voice filled the quiet air. A few moments of silence followed his speech, and it seemed as though no one would answer him, till at last Chopin lifted his delicate face and spoke.

"Nineteen centuries!" he exclaimed. "Ah, Cæsar, why could you not have lived on through all those years? Poland would still have been free, and the Poles would still have been a people."

"The world would have been free," rejoined the dead conqueror sadly. "I believed in unity, not in partition. I meant to build, not to destroy. My heart sinks when I see the world divided into nations, of which I would have made one nation."

"Every individual man is himself a world," said Heine. "A world that is born with him and dies with him; and under every gravestone lies the history of a world."<sup>1</sup>

"That is true," answered Chopin; "and my world was Poland, and is Poland still."

"Mine is the whole world of living beings," returned the poet.

<sup>1</sup> Heine, ii. p. 53.

"Yes," replied Chopin, with a fine smile; "I know it. But the world, according to Saint-Simon, would not resemble the world according to Julius Caesar."

"And yet," said Cæsar, "I watched the development of Saint-Simon's doctrines with interest. They failed—as all socialists' movements have failed and always must fail, to the end of time, until they proceed upon a different basis."

"Why?" asked Lady Brenda, taking courage.

"The usual mistake. The followers of Sanit-Simon, or the stronger part of them, tried to abolish marriage and they tried to invent a religion. Religions are not easily invented which can be imposed upon any considerable body of mankind; and no considerable body of civilised mankind has ever shown itself disposed to dispense with the institution of matrimony. The desire to obtain wealth without labour, the negation of religion and the degradation of women have ruined all socialistic systems which have ever been tried, and have undermined many powerful nations. It is impossible to govern men except by defending the security of property, upholding the existing form of religion, and exacting a rigorous respect for the institution of marriage."

"That is true," said Heine thoughtfully. "The object of the Saint-Simonists was to create a common property, to be shared equally for ever, and to inculcate a form of religion which they had invented. They might have succeeded in that. But Enfantin had the unlucky idea that free love was a good thing, and that ruined the whole institution just when it was at the point of success."

"It could never have succeeded," answered Cæsar, "even if he had let marriage exist, because the perpetual division of property is an impossibility. But the abolition of marriage would alone have been enough to ruin the scheme. I see in the modern world many nations, and each nation has its

own very distinct form of government. Apply as a test to each the question of the stability of property, of religion, and of marriage, and you will have at once the measure of its prosperity. I see in Europe a new empire, vast, strong, and successful. The government protects wealth, marriage, and religion; but religion is the least stable of the three, and there is no country in the world where there are so many who deny religion as there are in Germany. Look closer. You will see that there is no country in the world where there are so many anarchists; and those anarchists are perpetually sapping the sources of the nation's wealth and trying to undermine the institution of marriage. They are doing their work well. Unless there is a religious revival in Germany, she will soon cease to preponderate in Europe."

"That is a novel idea," said Augustus Chard.

"I think not," answered Caesar with a quiet smile. "I think it is as old as I am at least. But look at Europe again. Of all European nations, which is the most prosperous? England. In spite of many political mistakes: in spite of many foolish and expensive wars: in spite of the many incompetent statesmen and dissolute monarchs by whom she has been often governed: in spite of civil wars which have overthrown her government, and religious wars which have changed her dynasties: in spite of the narrowness of her original territory, the inclemencies of her climate, the barrenness of her Scotch mountains, and the indolent misery of her Irish peasants—in spite of all these, England is the most prosperous country in modern Europe. Apply my test. Is there any country in Europe where property is better protected, where religion is a more established fact, where the marriage contract is so scrupulously observed? Certainly not. Look at her neighbours—even at France. Why did France grow prosperous under Napoleon the Third? Because he pro-

tected religion, fostered the growth of commerce, and never so much as thought of attacking marriage. Now, the existing government is opposed to religion of any kind, and has introduced divorce, which in France is a very different matter from divorce in England. France is less prosperous than she was. Italy comes next with her cry of freedom. Religion is tolerated, marriage is respected, but the property of the individual is eaten up to pay the debts of the government. The country is not prosperous. Italy, as a nation, is a failure: not by her own fault, perhaps, but by force of circumstances. How can a man be healthy whose head is buried in ice while his feet are plunged in hot water? You must cool his feet and warm his head, but you must not apply leeches to every part of his body at once. When a man needs blood, you must not bleed him in order to show him that his veins are not yet quite empty."

"Nations suffer at first when any great change is made, even when it is a change for the good," remarked Heine.

"That is a maxim which has been made an excuse for much harm," replied Caesar. "I do not think it is always true. A nation certainly ought not to suffer for twenty years because it has been unified. In twenty years a new generation of men grows up; and if the change has been for good, those young men should find themselves in better circumstances at twenty than their fathers were before them. I have watched the world for nearly two thousand years; and I think the history of that period shows that whenever a change for the better has taken place in a nation's government it has been followed almost immediately by a great increase of prosperity. Within a very few years after my death, the empire of my nephew had eclipsed everything which had preceded it, and in some ways also everything which has been seen since. The second unification of the empire under Charlemagne gave a

fabulous impulse to the growth of wealth. Even the foundation of the present German empire was followed in a short time by a great development. England became powerful from the time of William's conquest. She increased in wealth and importance under the great changes made by Elizabeth. She made another stride under the reign of William the Third; and she reached the highest point of wealth and influence shortly after the inauguration of Free Trade, which was one of the greatest changes ever introduced into the administration of any country. There is a gigantic republic in America which but a few years ago was struggling in a great civil war, but which is now probably the most prosperous nation in the whole world. No: I believe that great changes, if they are good, are followed very soon by an increase of prosperity. This has not taken place in Italy, and there are no signs of it. On the contrary, her lands are ceasing to be cultivated, her men are emigrating in enormous numbers, and those who remain are obliged to

pay the taxes in order to maintain the fictitious credit of an imaginary importance. The best king, the best statesmen, even the best disposition of the people, cannot turn thousands of square miles of barren rock into a fertile garden, nor force a small and poor country to maintain the state of a great empire."

The dead man spoke calmly and sorrowfully of his country. He alone could realise the vast gulf that lay between his day and the present; and though he was Cæsar, yet the rest could hardly believe him. There was silence for a time in the great hall. Outside the terrace lay gleaming like snow beneath the moon, and far down upon the sea the broad path of her light glittered like a belt of diamonds on dark velvet.

Then a cool breeze sprang up, and the three dead men rose silently, and went out from among the living into the wonderful light.

"We have been dreaming," sighed Lady Brenda, rising from her chair and looking through the open window.

(*To be continued.*)

OXFORD IN THE MIDDLE AGES.<sup>1</sup>

Two centuries have elapsed since the publication of Anthony Wood's "History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford," yet no serious attempt has been made until now to improve upon that wonderful, but cumbersome and singularly ill-arranged compilation of precious materials. More than one modern antiquary has essayed to complete it by annotations or continuations; but nearly all subsequent historians have been content to quote it as an original authority, and Mr. Maxwell Lyte is the first who has ventured to go behind Anthony Wood, in the spirit of modern criticism,<sup>2</sup> by ransacking the manuscripts of Bryan Twyne, and other unpublished documents in the Record Office and the great public libraries. The result is a handsome volume of the highest value and interest, which, however, must be regarded as an historical torso, since it concludes with the death of Cardinal Wolsey. In fact, Mr. Maxwell Lyte's History, in its present form, would be more properly entitled a History of the University in the Middle Ages, and we must still have recourse to Anthony Wood for the more eventful periods of the Reformation and the Civil Wars, in which the University played a foremost part. But a cursory glance at Mr. Lyte's Table of Contents is sufficient to show that a History of the University in the Middle Ages is

no dry record of merely academical transactions. On the contrary, as he truly observes, the early clerks of Oxford were anything but "a body of sequestered students, intent only upon the advancement of learning." They were a struggling and militant society, constantly in conflict with external authorities claiming spiritual or civil jurisdiction over them: swayed by every current of popular opinion: waging an eternal warfare against the townsmen among whom they lived; and distracted among themselves by feuds of race, language, political sentiment, and philosophical or theological conviction. The well-known distich which describes Oxford as the hotbed of national strife was amply justified by the facts; and Mr. Lyte's readers are fully rewarded for their patience in mastering the details of the mediæval curriculum by narratives of disorderly outbreaks which make us marvel how, in so turbulent an atmosphere, quiet study could be carried on at all.

It is not very easy to understand why the author should have reserved for his ninth chapter an exhaustive examination of the myth which assigned the foundation of the University, and even of University College, to Alfred the Great. Suffice it to say that not a shred of real historical evidence can be produced in support of it. The passage which deceived Camden, and was imported by him into Asser's "Life of King Alfred," is now generally rejected as a forgery, dating, at earliest, from the reign of Richard the Second. Other records, alleging an equally ancient origin, are now believed to be of an equally recent date; and University College is more than suspected of having fabricated the

<sup>1</sup> "A History of the University of Oxford, from the earliest times to the year 1530." By H. Maxwell Lyte, M.A., Deputy Keeper of the Public Records. London: 1886.

<sup>2</sup> A curious proof of Anthony Wood's almost mechanical accuracy is afforded by an entry in the "Fasti Oxon." stating that John Favour, of New College, graduated as LL.B. on April 31, 1585; which impossible date turns out to be textually copied from the original record.

whole story, for its own purposes, at the end of the fourteenth century. The Schools of Oxford, out of which the University afterwards developed itself, cannot be traced back with certainty to a period beyond the reign of Henry the First. Indeed, one of Mr. Lyte's critics regards Giraldus Cambrensis' account of his visit in 1186 as the first historical mention of them. But the authentic history of the City in which these Schools grew up begins at least two centuries earlier, and was so important during the age immediately preceding the Norman Conquest as to deserve a fuller notice than Mr. Lyte awards to it.

Old as it is by comparison with the University, the City of Oxford is new by comparison with London and other seats of Roman colonies in Britain, or even with the older settlements of Saxons. Its situation on a low ridge of gravelly soil between the Cherwell and the Thames, protected by a network of watercourses on every side but the north, might well have recommended it for a station of the Roman legions, yet there is no record of its having been inhabited for centuries after the Saxon Conquest. A few traces of British occupation, as well as the remains of Roman villas, have been found in the neighbourhood, but not on the actual site, of Oxford : the Roman road from Dorchester to Bicester passes near, but not through, it ; and in the long struggles between the kingdoms of Mercia and Wessex, no siege of Oxford, or battle for the possession of it, is recorded among the incidents of any campaign. It is an equally significant fact that we hear nothing of Oxford in connection with the Abbey of Dorchester, but nine miles distant, where St. Birinus is stated to have established his see in 624, as the first Bishop of the West Saxons.

The unwritten history of Oxford, indeed, really begins with the foundation of St. Frideswide's Nunnery in the eighth century on the site now

occupied by Christ Church ; for the fact of this foundation in 727, or soon afterwards, admits of no reasonable doubt, whatever legends may have since obscured it. At this period Oxford, which had once been inclosed within the Mercian dominions as they encroached southward on Wessex, had again become a border-town of Mercia. This position it finally lost when Egbert, who succeeded in the year 800, extended his rule over all England. The alleged establishment of a mint at Oxford by King Alfred rests on the existence of coins with the inscription *Orsnaforda*, or *Oksnaforda*, the interpretation of which has of late been gravely disputed. The first undoubted mention of the City in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is under the date 912. "This year," says the chronicler, "died Æthered, ealdorman of the Mercians, and King Eadward took possession of London, and of Oxford, and of all the lands which owed obedience thereto." It is evident that Oxford already ranked as a place of some importance, since King Edward the Elder thus separated it from the province of Mercia, ruled by his sister, widow of Æthered, and brought it, with London, under his own immediate dominion. It is probable, but not certain, that its natural defences were strengthened during this century by the remarkable conical mound known as the Castle Hill, to guard it against incursions of the Danes moving up the river, "the great border-stream of Wessex and Mercia." It seems to have been the first town erected on the Thames above London, and must have increased in importance when London and the lower Thames valley were lost to England in the Danish Wars. There are some reasons for conjecturing that it had actually fallen into the hands of the Danes in the raids which preceded the peace of Wedmore (378), and was then restored. At all events, it appears to have been a fortified place before the end, if not at the beginning, of the tenth century and to

have become the capital of a shire, incorporated into the kingdom of Wessex, already on the eve of embracing the whole kingdom of England.

It was at Oxford, and probably within the precincts of its Castle, that Ælfward, son of King Edward, died in 924, very soon after his father. Oxford, however, can scarcely have been a town of the first dignity, if it be true that a National Gemot or Council was held, not there, but at Kirtlington, eight or nine miles distant, in 977, the King and Archbishop Dunstan being present; and that, when the Bishop of Crediton suddenly died there, his body was conveyed, not to St. Frideswide's, but to St. Mary's at Abingdon. At the opening of the next century, however (1002), it was forced into an infamous notoriety by the massacre of Danes perpetrated there by King Ethelred's order, on St. Brice's day. In the course of this massacre, which is known to us through a charter of King Ethelred himself, the unfortunate Danes took refuge in the tower, or church, of St. Frideswide's; but the people set fire to the wooden roof, and they were all burned with the sacred edifice. It is hardly surprising to hear that seven years later (1009), the victorious Danes, having marched through the Chiltern woods, sacked and burned Oxford, returning to their ships. They visited the country again in the following year; and in 1013, King Sweyn imposed "his law" on the men of Oxford and Winchester—towns which, in this century, are mentioned as almost in the same rank with London.

In 1015, Oxford again became the meeting-place of a National Gemot, and the scene of another treacherous murder. As the English Chronicle informs us in its simple language: "there the Ealdorman Eadric insnared Sigeforth and Morkere, the chief thanes in the Seven Burghs. He enticed them into his chamber, and therein they were foully slain. And the King then

took all their possessions, and ordered Sigeforth's widow to be taken and brought to Malmesbury." In the following year Ethelred died, and was succeeded by his son Edmund Ironside, who had seized the widow of Sigeforth and made her his wife. After a short but stormy reign of a few months only, Edmund suddenly died on his way back from Gloucester to London. According to Henry of Huntingdon, he was assassinated at Oxford by order of the same traitor Eadric, who had in the meantime submitted to Canute. Two years after his accession (1018), Canute also held a Gemot at Oxford, where "the Danes and Angles were unanimous for Edgar's" (that is, for English) "law." In Oxford, therefore, and doubtless within the precincts of Oxford Castle, were enacted several tragical incidents of the Danish invasion, as well as the solemn acceptance of English law, though under a Danish ruler. Eighteen years later, on the death of Canute in 1036, another great National Gemot was held at Oxford, and elected Harold Harefoot, under the influence of Northern thanes and Londoners, opposed by Earl Godwine, who, however, secured the dominion of Wessex for Harthacanute. In 1039, or 1040, Harold Harefoot died at Oxford. Nothing is heard of the City during the next twenty-six years, except that its tolls were regulated by law under Edward the Confessor, and that Earl Harold, afterwards King, passed through it on an expedition into Wales. In 1065, however, it once more becomes memorable as the place selected for the famous Gemot at which Tostig, Harold's brother, was outlawed. Morear was made Earl of Northumberland, and the Danish law was actually re-enacted, apparently at the instance of powerful nobles, representing the Danish section of England, whom Harold resolved to conciliate, against the wish of the King.

Considering the space which Oxford fills in the history of the eleventh cen-

tury, it is remarkable that it should have played no important part in the great drama of the Norman Conquest. It has been alleged, indeed, that it was besieged and half demolished by William the Conqueror; but there is no trustworthy evidence of such a siege, or of William having even approached so near to Oxford as Wallingford—the point at which he is traditionally reported to have crossed the Thames. What is certain is that in 1071 the Castle of Oxford was either built, or rebuilt on Saxon foundations, by Robert d'Oilgi. This Baron is also reported to have built the churches of St. George in the Castle, and St. Michael at the North Gate, as well as that of St. Mary Magdalen and St. Peter in the East, besides repairing other parish churches. He was also the reputed builder of the original Hythe Bridge, which probably formed the only western approach to the City.

By far the most authentic description of Oxford under the Conqueror is to be found in Domesday Book, which, however, makes no reference to churches or other public buildings. In this unique record, Oxford, "as well within the wall as without," is stated to have contained "243 houses paying geld, and 478 so waste and destroyed that they cannot pay the geld." Much stress has been laid on this last statement as supporting the story of a recent siege; but it has been explained, with greater probability, as the result of devastation committed by the rebel mob of the North, headed by Edwin and Morecar, who had broken up the Gemot at Northampton in 1085, and ravaged the country as far as Oxford, where it was ultimately held. At all events, we find but 243 houses paying "geld," some of which are described as *waste*; and the whole population of Oxford at that period has been estimated, upon a review of the data afforded by Domesday Book, as not exceeding one thousand. A large proportion of the registered houses or

"mansions" are styled "mural," because held subject to an obligation to repair the wall,—perhaps no more than an earthen rampart. Twenty-five of the mansions belonged to the King: sixty-nine to the Archbishop and five Bishops, among whom the Bishop of Lincoln was by far the largest proprietor: twenty-eight to the Abbeys of Bury St. Edmunds, Abingdon, and Eglesham: ninety-five to Robert D'Oilgi and eighteen other nobles of various degrees: eighteen to priests and canons in Oxford; and sixty-two to Oxford burgesses or other private owners. Not the slightest allusion is made to an University, or even to Schools. It is easy to fill up this picture with graphic details of the petty Oxford community, trafficking at markets and fairs, assessing its annual contribution of sixty pounds to the royal treasury at periodical town-meetings, and holding courts or motes for various purposes, one of which retained from an earlier age the singular name of *Portmannimot*. But all such details must needs be imaginary in the absence of contemporary records; and it is not even certain whether the City then contained only eight or as many as fifteen churches and chapels, or whether it had been mapped out into parishes. There can be no doubt, however, that in Port-Meadow, still the common pasture of the Oxford freemen, we have a genuine survival of pre-Norman times, or that in the Sheriff of the City we have, under a misleading name, a true representative of the ancient Port-reeve, whose business it was, as it still is, to watch over this municipal domain.

The later history of the mediæval City is almost merged in that of the University, and a large part of Mr. Lyte's volume is devoted to an account of the incessant and almost internecine struggles between the clerks and the townsmen. The late Mr. J. R. Green, himself a native of Oxford, condemned the mediæval University, in no measured terms, as having crushed the

liberties of the City. It is no less true, however, that the City owed its prosperity and renown, though not its existence, to its academical population ; and that, when the strife between the rival communities was at its height, the most powerful weapon of the University was the threat of removal to some other provincial town. This threat was partially carried out on more than one occasion. In 1209, and again in 1239, there were secessions of discontented Oxonians to Paris, Reading, and Cambridge. Soon after the famous Parliament of Oxford in 1258, there arose a desperate conflict, in which the clerks seem to have been most to blame. The King withdrew his protection from them ; and a large body of Oxford scholars migrated to Northampton, whither many refugees from Cambridge had already betaken themselves in consequence of a similar riot. They afterwards took an active part in defending Northampton against the Royal forces ; but ultimately returned to Oxford in 1264 or 1265, in deference to orders issued by Simon de Montford in the King's name. So familiar was the idea of migration from Oxford that Walter de Merton, in founding the first Oxford College, expressly authorised its scholars to settle, if necessary, at some other place of general education. The murderous affrays of 1297 and 1354, which are graphically depicted by Mr. Lyte, were followed by a temporary suspension of lectures and dispersion of students, few of whom, however, appear to have settled elsewhere. The memorable secession to Stamford in 1334 was chiefly the result of violent feuds between the northern and southern "nations" within the University itself ; and the memory of it was preserved in an oath against attending lectures at Stamford which, up to the year 1827, was administered to all candidates for a degree.

In the meantime, the chronic disputes between the University and City had assumed so aggravated a form as

frequently to call for royal intervention. The very earliest document preserved in the University archives records the punishment of certain Oxford townspeople who had arrested and hanged three clerks. But the most compendious statement of the grievances alleged by the citizens is to be found in a Royal award (scarcely noticed by Mr. Lyte) made by Edward the First in 1290, which embodies certain articles of peace then concluded between the parties. It begins with a mutual renunciation of all past claims up to the date of the appeal, and a promise on the part of the Mayor and Burgesses to respect in future all the rights and privileges of the University under their Charter, which, however, they allege to have been grievously strained. Their first complaint is that the Chancellor of his own authority sets free prisoners who have been lawfully arrested by the Aldermen and Bailiffs, and cites the latter to appear before himself. To this complaint the King replies by conceding this authority to the Chancellor, where one of the parties to a quarrel is a clerk, except in cases of homicide, or "mayhem," and enjoins the Mayor to seek redress for any abuse of such jurisdiction in the King's Courts. The next complaint is that the Chancellor appropriates to himself victuals forfeited under the statutes against forestalling and regrating : of which the King disposes by giving a concurrent jurisdiction to the Chancellor and the Mayor, with a provision that victuals so forfeited shall be given to the Hospital of St. John. A third complaint is that the Chancellor imposes exorbitant fines and recognisances on laymen (townspeople) imprisoned for trespasses against clerks, as the condition of their liberation : a practice which the King censures, ordering him to exact only reasonable sums in future. A fourth complaint is that, whereas the Bailiffs of the City are bound, under the University Charter, to be sworn

before the Chancellor in some "common place," they are compelled by the University to take the oath in St. Mary's Church, with no saving clause for their allegiance to the Crown, and with an additional clause precluding them from recourse to the King's Courts. This usurpation, as might be expected, is absolutely condemned and prohibited by the King. The fifth complaint is of the same nature as the second, but relates to the forfeiture of unsound meat or fish, and is decided in the same way, by assigning the forfeited victuals to the Hospital of St. John. The sixth complaint is that the "chartered privilege of the University" in respect of jurisdiction, which properly belongs only to scholars, is unduly extended so as to embrace tailors, barbers, writers, parchment-makers, and others, with their families. This point seems to have been settled by agreement, without the King's intervention, by defining the University privilege as including clerks and their families, with servants and tradespeople, even of the classes specified, if immediately engaged in waiting upon clerks. The seventh complaint is that the University will not allow townspeople to let their houses to scholars for a term of less than ten years. This limitation is annulled for the future by the King, who, however, forbids any collusion whereby scholars may be turned out of houses tenanted by them, or rents may be raised against them. The eighth complaint is that townspeople are summoned before the Chancellor at unreasonable times without due notice: in response to which the King requires one day's notice to be given in ordinary cases, but allows summary citations for violations of the peace. The ninth complaint is that, at the suit of clerks, the Chancellor deprives soldiers and other strangers passing through Oxford of their riding-gear and trappings to make satisfaction for debts contracted elsewhere. This arbitrary power is restricted by the

King to debts contracted in Oxford. The tenth complaint is that, when a layman is desperately wounded by a clerk, the Chancellor demands the person of the clerk to be surrendered to him, before it is known whether the sufferer be wounded to death. On this point the Chancellor is covertly rebuked by the King, and sternly enjoined to desist from the rescue of clerks in such cases. The last complaint is that the University insists upon houses rented by scholars being valued every five, instead of every seven, years: which complaint the King overrules, declaring five years to be the period contemplated in the Charter. This complaint, like the seventh, is of course a protest against the ancient claim of the University to something like fixity of rent, if not of tenure, for houses in the occupation of scholars: a claim which proved the fertile source of innumerable quarrels.

The frequent reference in this award to the Chancellor and Charter of the University opens out a long vista of antiquarian controversy which runs through almost every chapter of Mr. Lyte's History. The unlearned reader, however, may be content to believe that, after all, "the University of Oxford did not spring into being in any particular year, or at the bidding of any particular founder: it was not established by any formal charter of incorporation. Taking its rise in a small and obscure association of teachers and learners, it developed spontaneously into a large and important body, long before its existence was recognised by prince or by prelate." In the earliest writs and documents relating to its privileges it is recognised as an existing institution, but perhaps the decree issued by Henry the Third in 1244 may deserve to be called "the Magna Charta of the University," since it definitely "created a special tribunal for the benefit of students, and invested the Chancellor with a jurisdiction which no legate or bishop could confer,

and which no civil judge could annul." The origin of the Chancellor's office is enveloped in much obscurity ; but he is clearly described in a letter of the Papal Legate, dated 1214, as the nominee of the Bishop of Lincoln, whose vast diocese then embraced Oxford. It does not follow that even then he was not elected by the University Convocation ; and it is certain that soon afterwards he was so elected, though his election long continued to be subject to confirmation by the diocesan. Probably his gradual absorption into the academic body was facilitated by the fact that, unlike the Chancellor at Paris, he was not a member of a Cathedral Chapter, or living under the eye of a resident Bishop. At all events, by the middle of the thirteenth century he was treated as an independent representative of the University, while the Archdeacon of Oxford was the official deputy of the Bishop. A century later, he was given full jurisdiction by the Pope himself over all members of the University, religious and lay, to the exclusion of the Archdeacon ; and it was solemnly ordained that his election by the University itself should be sufficient, without the confirmation of the diocesan.

Mr. Lyte observes a judicious reticence on the rise and growth of the Proctorial authority. Proctors are associated with the Chancellor, as delegates of the University, in letters-patent of 1248 ; but it does not appear what their original functions were, or how they were appointed. Anthony Wood tells us that, in 1343, the University agreed that one Proctor should always be a Northerner, and the other a Southerner, for the purpose of scrutinising the votes at elections of the Chancellor. On the other hand, at the University of Paris, the Proctors specially represented from the very first the four "nations" into which the Faculty of Arts was divided, the Deans being the chosen officers of the Faculties as such. Considering that

the University of Paris was the elder sister, at least, if not the mother, of the English University, this analogy raises a strong presumption in favour of the Proctors being at first representatives of the two nations into which the Oxford "Artists" were divided. Such a presumption derives some confirmation from an expression found in a letter of Adam Marsh, written in 1253, where "*duo Rectores pro Artisticis*" are mentioned as subscribing a statute against the Friars. Mr. Lyte identifies these two Rectors with the Proctors, and at Cambridge the phrase "*Rectores sive Proctores*" was common in the Middle Ages. But, as Proctors are specifically named in an University Ordinance of about the middle of the thirteenth century, it is perhaps safer to regard them generally as officers elected by the whole body of graduates, filling a place not unlike that of the Rector at other Universities, but more particularly charged with the financial duties of stewards and collectors. The importance attached to such duties, as compared with the highest objects of education and learning, is a distinctive feature of academical statutes in the Middle Ages. Like the primitive Church, the primitive University was essentially a society of men struggling for their livelihood ; and the great movements of thought which agitated Oxford in the age of the Schoolmen and of Wyclif left fainter traces in University legislation than squabbles with the City over pecuniary rights, and conflicts between the secular and regular clergy, in which material interests were very largely involved.

These conflicts indeed, engrossed much of the internal life, and wasted much of the energy, of the University during the whole period of the Middle Ages. Probably the claustral schools of the Benedictines were the cradle of academical study ; but the University had already outgrown its infancy and had developed a vigorous secular teaching, before the establishment of the

Mendicant Friars at Oxford in the early part of the thirteenth century. During the remainder of that century, these Orders, encouraged by the great Robert Grosseteste, supplied the University with its most eminent lecturers; and it is the special glory of the Franciscans to have produced in the same age Adam Marsh and Roger Bacon. But the secular clerks soon became jealous of the Friars, partly because they sought to obtain degrees in Theology without satisfying the requirements of the Arts Faculty, which at Oxford, no less than at Paris, claimed a paramount ascendancy; and partly because they were constantly decoying young students into the assumption of monastic vows. Merton, the first of Oxford Colleges, was expressly founded by a Bishop of Rochester as a seminary for the secular clergy, and no "religious" person could be admitted to its benefits. The same policy was adopted by almost all the other founders of Colleges, and the gradual rise of Colleges marked the downfall of monastic influence. Mr. Lyte seems to have undervalued the importance of Colleges in the mediæval University, when he says that they did not become predominant until near the end of the fifteenth century. No doubt it was not until 1432 that "chamberdekins," or non-collegiate students, were formally abolished by statute; and for many years afterwards a majority of students may have been lodged in Halls rather than in Colleges. But it is certain that even in the fourteenth century, when the number of Colleges rose from three only to seven, they were already the dominant element in the University. Out of about sixty-eight Proctors, who are known to have held office in that century, all but eighteen were entered as members of a College; and it is highly probable that in several of these eighteen cases the name of the College was accidentally omitted. The proportion of Chancellors and Vice-

Chancellors (or Commissaries), known to have been members of Colleges, is much smaller in the earlier part of the century, but very considerable in the later part. Mr. Lyte himself, with a happy inconsistency, dwells at great length on the history of each collegiate foundation, and furnishes elaborate extracts of their statutes, which are by no means the least readable or instructive part of his work.

Few readers will care to master the chapters which deal in detail with the organisation of studies and disputations in the University of the Schoolmen. Those who are familiar with the restless multiplication and amendment of examination-statutes in modern Oxford will be slow to believe in the existence at any one time of a symmetrical or uniform working-system; and will readily surmise that various arrangements for lectures and degrees, commonly described as successive, were really in simultaneous operation. The broad features of the mediæval curriculum may, however, be concisely stated. Neither the University nor the Colleges enforced any entrance-examination; and freshmen had to undergo a preliminary training in grammar, then regarded as the basis of all knowledge. The subsequent course of instruction was mainly logical. But it is material to observe that, in that age, logic, in common with most of the other "Arts," represented an accomplishment deemed to be useful. It was not only as an intellectual discipline, but as giving the power of reading and writing Latin, that grammar was assiduously taught. It was as instruments of controversy and persuasion that logic and rhetoric were cultivated. It was chiefly for the sake of practical astronomy, closely allied to astrology, that mathematical lore was valued. Logic derived an additional advantage from its supplying the method by which proficiency in all other studies was tested, and the mediæval disputations were the prototype of modern

examinations. Little or no attention was given to scholarship, in the ordinary sense, to literary culture, or to the acquisition of useful knowledge. The grand aim of education was to sharpen the logical powers, and so to prepare the mind for instruction in the higher professional Faculties—law, medicine, and, above all, theology—which mediæval thinkers agreed in recognising as the crown of all the sciences. The “three philosophies”—natural, moral, and metaphysical—were mainly reserved for the interval of three years between “determination,” which qualified a student for the degree of Bachelor, and “inception” which constituted him a Master, and conferred on him the lucrative privilege of teaching.

This system, if such it can be called, was finally overthrown by the Reformation; but it was undermined by the Renaissance, which made itself felt at Oxford earlier than is usually supposed. Mr. Lyte connects this movement with the return of the Papal Court to Rome after the Great Schism, and his description of it, though somewhat too biographical, is extremely interesting. It may be true, as he says, that “no attempt was made in England to revive the study of classical literature before the reign of Henry the Seventh.” But Mr. Lyte himself mentions five more or less eminent students from Oxford who attended the lectures of Guarino at Ferrara in the first half of the fifteenth century, and became collectors of classical books.

The effect of the Renaissance in modifying the studies of Oxford may be illustrated by a comparison between the contents of College libraries at the end of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries respectively. A very interesting catalogue of the Oriel College library in the year 1375 has lately been published. From this it appears to have consisted almost entirely of manuals on grammar, logic, philosophy, theology, and law, both canon and civil, the studies cultivated in the

various Faculties. Translations of Aristotle, copies of the Digest and the Code, works of Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus, treatises of Augustine, Gregory, and other standard divines, with a Bible, and a Latin edition of Euclid, make up the staple of this collection. Literature is conspicuous by its absence, and the classics are represented by “*Macrobius de sompno Scipionis*.” There is unhappily no record of the books contributed by William Rede and Simon Bredon to form the Merton library, about the year 1376; but the few books which are specifically named among the many said to have been presented by Fellows of Merton during the same period are of an exactly similar character. On the other hand, a catalogue of Lincoln College library, compiled about 1474, or a century later, includes a large number of the Latin classics, such as Virgil, Cicero, Livy, Terence, Plautus, Horace, and Juvenal. The University Register shows that so far back as 1448 the Georgics of Virgil were the subject of University lectures; and in the catalogues of books given to the University by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, in 1439 and 1443, we find, among tomes of scholastic lore, Cicero’s Orations and Epistles, Livy, Suetonius, Ovid, Pliny, Terence, and an oration of Æschines, with Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch. The University system of disputations and examinations was still based on the old learning, but the new learning had already penetrated into the libraries. It was soon to receive an impulse from the efforts of Erasmus and his fellow-labourers, which, after a brief reaction, ultimately secured for Latin and Greek scholarship a supremacy in Oxford education as complete as that once held by scholastic logic, until it was once more challenged by the progress of philosophy, history, and natural Science.

Though rich in illustrations of mediæval life and manners, the his-

tory of the University before the Reformation has few points of contact with the great political events of that romantic period. The clerks of Oxford were not concerned with the escape of Matilda from Oxford Castle, or with the two Councils held there by Stephen, or with the Parliament of 1258 which gave its name to the Provisions of Oxford, or with the frequent residence of the Court at Woodstock. The Barons' War of the thirteenth century, the Scotch and French Wars of the next two centuries, the Peasants' Revolt with its sequel in the insurrection of Jack Cade, the Wars of the Roses, and the constitutional reaction under the Tudors, left no trace on academical life, and scarcely find a record in academical annals. The great and direct influence which the University was destined to exercise on the State Church in the sixteenth, and on the State itself in the seventeenth century, was as yet undeveloped and unrealised. But the depth and extent of its influence upon the world of thought and belief can hardly be overestimated. There were trained most of the great ecclesiastics who became, not only the prelates, but the Chancellors and statesmen, of the Middle Ages. There natural science found its earliest apostle in Roger Bacon, and scholastic philosophy two of its profoundest exponents in Duns Scotus and Bradwardine. There William of Ockham is believed to have raised the standard of revolt against Papal authority in matters of faith, and to have proclaimed the severance of logic from theology. There John Wyclif (to whose career Mr. Lyte devotes an admirable chapter) assuredly became the pioneer of the Lollard movement, and anticipated by four generations several of the doctrines afterwards preached by Luther. The ignorant statement of Huber that "Oxford was nowhere to be found in the great Church Councils of the fifteenth century" is almost the reverse of the

fact. True it is that it no longer eclipsed Paris, as it had in the golden age before the great pestilence; and that its part in ecclesiastical affairs was secondary to that played by the leading University of Western Christendom. But it steadily and successfully resisted the scheme proposed by the University of Paris for ending the Great Schism, insisting that a General Council must be summoned. This General Council, which met at Pisa in 1409, deposed both the rival Popes, and procured the election of a Friar who had taken a Bachelor of Divinity's degree at Oxford. At the Council of Constance, held in 1414, the University of Oxford was ably represented; and Henry of Abingdon, afterwards Warden of Merton, produced a great impression by his sermon advocating a reformation of the Church. The University was specially invited to appear by its delegates at the Council of Basle in 1431; and though it was reduced to solicit contributions towards the expense of the mission, it found a worthy representative in John Kemp, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. Poor as it was, it maintained a small public library, when such institutions were still unknown in Italy, which, enriched by the noble benefaction of Duke Humphrey, was among the marvels of the age before the invention of printing. If Oxford was not the place at which this momentous invention was first adopted in England, it certainly possessed one of the very earliest presses, from which issued the first classical book printed in England, a significant emblem of the coming Renaissance, in which the University took so leading a part. Two conclusive proofs of the position occupied by the University at the beginning of the sixteenth century are the superb projects of Cardinal Wolsey for organising there a propaganda of "the new literature in the service of the old Church," and the unscrupulous efforts of Henry the Eighth to obtain decrees from the Oxford Convocation in favour

of the Divorce and the Royal Supremacy.

But we are here on the confines of the Reformation-period, and almost beyond the border-line of the Middle Ages, which embrace the infancy and youth of the University. Henceforth, its political and social importance was to increase, and a more conspicuous place was reserved for it in the general history of England. But its original character was to be changed. It was no longer to share with Cambridge an almost exclusive monopoly of English education in all its departments, from the highest realms of philosophical speculation to the simplest rudiments of grammar. It was no longer to be the *schola secunda ecclesiae* in Europe; and the intellectual centre of gravity in England was inevitably to be shifted to

the commercial and political centre of the kingdom in the metropolis itself. In the ampler and brighter day now dawning upon the nation, the light of scholastic learning, so long kept alive at Oxford, could not fail to wax pale and dim. In becoming secularised, the University forfeited that unique prestige which it derived from the transcendent authority of the mediæval Church. It was still to become a great power in the State, and to educate a long succession of scholars and gentlemen for service in Parliament, in the sacred ministry, and in the learned professions. But its empire over the national mind was no longer to be so far-reaching, and its place in the national life was never again to be so imposing, as it had been in the Middle Ages.

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